

THE UK'S BIGGEST REGIONAL GAY LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

ZONE

MIDLANDS EDITION

FEBRUARY 2017
ISSUE 238



PET SHOP BOYS

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AS PART OF THEIR 'SUPER' TOUR

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BILLY ELLIOT

Heather Kincaid takes a look at the hit musical as it pirouettes into Birmingham as part of its first ever UK tour...



On 3 March 1985, the longest industrial strike in British history was finally brought to an exhausted end. For 12 months, thousands of miners across the country had refused to work, in protest against the planned closure of UK collieries. Over the course of the year, the dispute became increasingly bitter, with frequent outbreaks of violence and families struggling to keep themselves financially afloat. But despite its unprecedented scale, the strike ultimately failed - a historic outcome seen by many as signalling the end of an era.

Set against this backdrop of confrontation, abject poverty and dashed hope is the story of Billy Elliot - a young boy with an unexpected talent for ballet whose family is at the heart of the conflict in County Durham. Coming to Birmingham Hippodrome next month as part of its first ever UK tour, the smash-hit stage musical shows how Billy's abilities offer him a lifeline out of the world he's been born into. Sadly, the rest of his family and community are not so lucky.

"It's easy to look back on it all now and feel like you know the outcome, but when you're doing this show, it's important not to look at it in the past tense," says Scott Garnham, who plays Billy's older brother and local strike ringleader Tony. "No union strike had ever lost like this before, so when Tony goes out there, he really believes that they're going to win."

It's this confidence in solidarity that makes the play's final revelation so utterly devastating. By the time we get to the end of the story, Tony is explaining to Billy that while he goes off to complete his dance training, everyone he knows in Easington and beyond will soon be unemployed.

At the centre of Billy Elliot is the simple tale of a little boy chasing his dream, and since the film first appeared in 2000, it's been widely credited with helping to change attitudes towards dance, giving hundreds of boys access to a previously unthought-of world and driving up standards for male dancers throughout the industry.

But there's another, arguably even more poignant, side to the story, one that's concerned with the transition from an age of



nationalised industry and community solidarity into Margaret Thatcher's vision of an individualistic world in which "There is no such thing as society".

"There are sort of two different stories about trying to overcome adversity," Garnham explains, "one about a little boy trying to escape his environment, and one about the strike. And where one succeeds, the other fails spectacularly. When we go to places near mining communities, I feel like they really get what we're trying to say with our story. In Sunderland, you could see fully grown men crying in the audience when we talked about how there'll be no pits left in 10 years' time."

Amazingly, over a decade after the musical made its stage debut, the current tour marks the first time it has moved out of the West End to visit the areas whose history it concerns.

"We were so nervous before we went to Sunderland, but it was the most amazing experience, a real career highlight. Even though this is their story, it hasn't been back there since they filmed the movie more than 15 years ago. We actually went to the Easington Town Hall, where a lot of our show is set, and met some of the people, and it's amazing the effect it still has there - even now there's still places where the people who broke the strike can't go. Then, on the opening night, we had the Easington Colliery Brass Band playing outside the theatre, which was a really nice, heartfelt moment."

Far from seeming frivolous, in many ways the musical version has an even greater, more immediate impact than the film. On stage, the clashes between miners and police are brought vividly to life.

"There are similarities obviously, but we're not trying to put the film on stage. This is very much its own thing. I think particularly the story of me and my dad is much more prominent in the musical. Also, whereas in the film Billy is the only character who

dances, in the musical, it's all about showing a distinction between the ways in which different characters move. So the choreography for the policemen and the miners has got its own language if you like, which is in contrast to the very heightened choreography for Billy."

Although it's stylised, the violence is viscerally felt, the child's perspective instilling a sense of real fear. At times, the rioting surrounds Mrs Wilkinson's ballet classes, threatening to crash down on the safe space that Billy has found for himself. Elsewhere, armour-clad officers stomp towards him with riot shields and truncheons raised, seeming to embody the oppressive atmosphere that's constantly threatening to push him over the edge.

All this isn't to dismiss the show's more straightforward pleasures. When Billy performs at his audition before an unreadable panel (a role in which the audience is cast through clever staging), we share wholeheartedly in his father's tearful pride and wonder. Meanwhile, Billy's less-than-eager foray into crossdressing with his fearlessly flamboyant best friend, Michael, is both heartwarming and hilarious - the dancing dresses, flashing lights and sparkly backdrops in Express Yourself provide one of the show's most spectacular moments. And then there's the beautiful dream ballet, where Billy literally soars above the sadness of the world around him, in a gorgeous duet with his older self, as played by Luke Cinque-White.

Yet even this can be seen as part of the bigger picture of social change over the last few decades. The growing acceptance of unconventional characters like Billy and Michael hints at the burgeoning culture of individual expression and liberal social values that the '80s ushered in. In different times, perhaps Tony and his father would not only have been more accepting of Billy's choices, but even better equipped to deal with their own frustrations.

"Sometimes people watching the show forget that it was such a different time in 1984," says Garnham, "and that this little boy saying he wants to go off and be a ballet dancer would be like saying you want to go off into space and live with the aliens now. I think there was one review that described Tony as the villain of the piece, and I felt a bit like they hadn't really understood, whereas when you go to Sunderland or somewhere like that, they understand that there are no villains - other than maybe Margaret Thatcher!"

"On the surface Tony isn't the nicest brother to Billy, but I think it comes out of a place of actually really caring. He does love Billy, but he's quite hot-headed and rash, and maybe not as in touch with his emotions as men are able to be now. He's passionate, and that tends to come out in anger. But even though he and Billy seem very different, I think that actually, if you look a bit deeper, there are a lot of similarities between them."

For Garnham and the rest of the cast, the affection is unfeigned. Since the show began its tour a year ago, the five boys sharing the demanding title role - Adam Abbou, Emile Gooding, Matthew Lyons, Haydn May and Lewis Smallman - have grown a lot, both as performers and as people.

"When we started our rehearsals, some of them were quite timid, and although they're all fantastically talented, they each excelled at different things. Now it's virtually impossible to say who's the better dancer or singer or whatever, and they're all really confident and able to hold their own in conversations. The amount of discipline that's required for the role is incredible - I can't think of any other musical with a part like this. But I do feel like we're all one big family and we all look after each other, from the kids to the oldest cast members."

**Billy Elliot is at Birmingham Hippodrome
Tuesday 7 March - Saturday 29 April.**

BACK IN TIME

Shrewsbury celebrates LGBT history with a three-day festival



Following the huge success of their debut festival in 2016, volunteer group Salopian Rainbows this month return with the second instalment of Shrewsbury's Back In Time festival - an event presented as part of the third National Festival Of LGBT History.

The National Festival takes place in Manchester, Liverpool, Bournemouth, Coventry, Exeter, Preston, London, York and Shrewsbury, and has been organised as part of LGBT History Month by the charity, Schools Out UK.

Organisers have worked hard to plan three days of presentations, keynote speeches, contributions from schools, entertainment and film, taking place across the weekend of Friday 17 to Sunday 19 February.

So what's on?

Friday 17 February - Launch Night

University Centre Shrewsbury
6.15pm - 9.45pm | Free

Officially opening the 2017 Back In Time 2 festival is Shrewsbury's Mayor, Councillor Ioan Jones, and Sue Sanders, the Chair of LGBT charity, Schools Out UK.

Diana Souhami

Keynote Speech

Writer Diana Souhami has been highly praised for award-winning works including *Gluck: Her Biography*, *Gertrude And Alice*, and the bestselling *Mrs Keppel And Her Daughter*.

Caroline Paige

True Colours

Caroline Paige recounts her experiences of being transgender in the British military before and after permissive service. Her talk covers the period from 1980 to 2014, the highs and the lows, in peacetime and in war.

Andrew Lumsden

Heroic Architects of the 1967 Act

As a result of being in London Gay Liberation Front, Andrew Lumsden was the first national journalist in the world to come out voluntarily. He participated in the Gay News project, which gave heart to thousands of LGBT people in Britain and Ireland, and which the Government tried to close down.

Jane Traies

The Other Consenting Adults

Jane has been recording the experiences of the UK's oldest generations of lesbians for several years now. Some of these stories feature in her book. She continues to collect the memories and opinions of women born

before 1950 who identify as lesbian or bisexual, and her next project is to publish a collection of lesbian life stories.

Saturday 18 February

University Centre Shrewsbury
10am - 5pm | Free

Young People's Showcase

In advance of the weekend, festival guest **Caroline Paige** will be visiting schools and colleges in the area and talking to students. Schools will feed back in this Saturday morning session, which includes presentations from students and a very special ceremony hosted by XYZ.

Whose Heritage Is It Anyway?

James Pardoe, Director of Design, Heritage & the Built Environment at University Centre Shrewsbury, along with Emma-Kate Lanyon, from Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery, discuss how heritage is defined, whose stories get captured and the value and significance given to different life narratives.

The Oldest New Woman And Her Incurable Welsh Friend

Jane Hoy and **Helen Sandler** present the story of Frances Power Cobbe, an Irish feminist and political activist, and Mary Lloyd, a Welsh artist, who were partners for 35 years.

They met in Rome, lived and campaigned together in London and ended their years in Dolgellau, Wales, where they are buried together. From the mid-19th century, both women were leading lights in the campaigns for women's rights and animal rights.

Taster Presentations

A series of 30-minute taster presentations from **Peter Roscoe, Jane Traies, Lisa Power, Peter Scott-Presland, Kate Hutchinson and Mark Hignett.**

An Evening Of Entertainment

at *The Hive, Shrewsbury*

7pm - 10:30pm | £12

A relaxing evening of music, spoken word and theatre, hosted by MC **Helen Sandler.**

The evening features the **Queer Playback Theatre**, an ensemble with a difference. They'll be reproducing favourite theatrical moments - with a bit of artistic licence!

Nic Herriot draws on her life experiences to highlight everyday quirks, in a show that promises plenty by way of quick wit and clever observation.

Mark Bunyan and his keyboard keep you entertained with a musical comedy cabaret mix.

Sunday 19 February

Films

Tab Hunter Confidential

Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury

10:30am | £5

In the 1950s, Tab Hunter is number one at the box office and number one on the music charts. He is Hollywood's most sought-after star and America's boy next door. Natalie Wood, Debbie Reynolds and Sophia Loren are just a few of the actresses he is romantically linked to. Nothing, it seems, can damage his skyrocketing career. Nothing, that is, except for the fact that Tab Hunter is secretly gay.

In *Tab Hunter Confidential*, we meet, for the first time, the real Tab Hunter - a happy, healthy survivor of Hollywood's rollercoaster - as he shares his story.

Peacock (Short Film)

Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury

12:30am | £3.50

A twisted, queer romance set in picturesque 19th century Bohemia and telling the true story of one of the nation's most influential writers. A tale of suspense, laughter, violence, hope, heart, nudity, sex and a happy ending. Mostly a happy ending...

The Celluloid Closet

The Hive, Shrewsbury

2pm | £5

For the final event of the 2017 festival, the Sapian Rainbows have chosen this through-the-ages glimpse into LGBT lives on screen. Based on Vito Russo's book, look through gay eyes to catch something different - you may be surprised by what you find!

Back In Time 2, part of the National Festival Of LGBT History, takes place in Shrewsbury from Friday 17 to Sunday 19 February.

Visit shrewsburylgbthistory.org.uk for more information.



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WHO'S YOUR GAY SUPERHERO?

MCM COMIC CON

Cartoon characters, supernatural creatures, cosplay crowds - and most importantly, men in lycra - the MCM Comic Con is a world unto itself. Midlands Zone checks out a phenomenon that has its roots firmly planted in the Midlands region...



MCM Comic Con Midlands is held at Telford International on Saturday 11 February.
MCM Comic Con Birmingham takes place at the NEC on Saturday 18 to Sunday 19 March.



There can be few in the UK today who haven't witnessed the stunning spectacle of crowds of cosplayers descending on fan conventions, at least on screen if not in person.

Over the last few years, the popularity of such events has soared, with large-scale London shows attracting eye-watering attendance figures in excess of 133,000.

It's perhaps surprising then that the biggest company in the business is based here in the Midlands, running three local conventions annually in addition to shows across the country from its offices in Daventry, Northamptonshire.

Now firmly cemented in the cultural calendars of countless die-hard fans who visit every year, the hugely successful MCM (Movies, Comics & Media) group continues to grow, extending its reach beyond UK borders into Ireland, Belgium and Germany. Whether or not you're a regular visitor, if you've ever had the chance to attend an MCM Comic Con, it's not hard to understand the appeal.

Incongruously nestled behind the business-like facades of conference and exhibition centres, every MCM convention is a world unto itself, where cartoon characters spring to life and supernatural creatures freely roam, where stalls swelled with merchandise and unique fan creations stretch as far as the eye can see, and where video and tabletop gaming become serious competitive sports.

Like an old-fashioned festival of misrule, everything is upside-down. While Hollywood stars become ordinary people, sitting and talking amongst their fans, ordinary folks get their chance to enjoy the limelight,

taking to the stage to perform in painstakingly handmade costumes to heartfelt and hard-earned applause, even winning accolades and prizes for their endeavours.

While young people make up a large part of the audience, it's by no means exclusive - there are fans to be found of all ages and generations, from those who grew up in the sci-fi heyday of the 1960s, to the children of the digital revolution of today.

Look closely and you might even spot whole families wearing matching costumes. It's something that's encouraged. At both MCM Birmingham and MCM Midlands in Telford, kids under 10 go free after priority entry ends at 11am. Even if you enter feeling cynical, the overwhelming dedication, warmth, enthusiasm and inclusivity of the fans is irresistible, whether you're dressed as Deadpool or a Disney princess.

But it wasn't always so. The MCM story dates right back to 2001, in those quiet days of geekdom before Spider-Man had kicked off a superhero movie revolution, before Russell T Davies had revived Doctor Who, before comics had reached out to mainstream readership, and well before the cosplay phenomenon had really taken off in the UK. Some small-scale conventions and specialised gatherings already existed, but it was SciFi Shows' Paul Miley and Wolf Events' Bryan Cooney who were the first to hatch a plan to bring something akin to the all-encompassing American fan events to Britain, also partly inspired by the NEC's nostalgic Memorabilia show, which would later be subsumed into MCM Birmingham (in 2005).

Thanks to a happy confluence of circumstances that saw attitudes change towards

previously sidelined interests, conventions are now such big business that independents are constantly cropping up. But 16 years and multiple shows later, MCM's remain the biggest and most popular in Britain, unrivalled in attendance outside London.

Said MCM Expo Group CEO Bryan Cooney: "The Midlands holds a special place in our hearts. As it is, after all, where our company is based, we plan on providing an awesome show for the region's enthusiastic audience of sci-fi, comic book and film fans. We've welcomed a host of great special guests to our Midlands comic cons over the years; this time round we already have Game Of Thrones' Ian McElhinney (Ser Barristan Selmy) and Red Dwarf's Chris Barrie (Rimmer)."

In addition to these and other fantastic guests still to be announced, those planning a trip to the forthcoming shows in Telford and Birmingham can expect to see indie writers and artists filling the Comic Village, robot wars, a Steampunk Emporium with workshops and talks, a KidsZone, eSports competitions, panel discussions, changing areas, a costume repair desk and of course the Cosplay Masquerade finale, all included in the price of a ticket.

Regular stallholders like Amazing Cake Co, Manga Entertainment, Genki Gear, CeX and Tokyo Toys (who recently set up a permanent shop in Birmingham) also return, alongside a host of other local and national businesses.

And as an extra incentive to stop by in Telford, costume-clad visitors will be eligible for 50% off ice-skating at the Telford Ice Rink!

Manchester Airport 'delighted' to sponsor Birmingham Pride's Cabaret Marquee Stage

Manchester Airport, the UK's third largest airport, has agreed to sponsor Birmingham Pride 2017.

As part of the sponsorship deal, the airport will brand and name the Cabaret Marquee Stage, which will now be known as the Manchester Airport Cabaret Marquee.

As well as being stage sponsors, the airport will also have its staff in attendance over the weekend, joining in with the parade celebrations to shout about its 210 global routes, particularly a new direct route to San Francisco.

Commenting on the news, Patrick Alexander, Manchester Airport's Head of Marketing, said: "We are delighted to be working with Birmingham Pride for the first time, to support such a worthwhile event.

"We've sponsored other Prides in the UK and thought it was time to widen our reach to showcase the great work undertaken by Manchester Airport, with many of our passengers coming from the Midlands.

"We're looking forward to working closely with the Birmingham Pride team on what I am sure will be a world-class event."

Lawrence Barton, Festival Director of Birmingham Pride, is excited about the new partnership: "We're really looking forward to working with the Manchester Airport team and can't wait for our partnership to fully take off.

"This year will be bigger and better than ever before, with a host of exciting announcements



set to be made over the coming weeks and months.

"We'd like to thank Manchester Airport for their support, which helps great causes across the city."

This year's event takes place on Saturday 27

and Sunday 28 May, with tickets available now from birminghampride.com.

Birmingham Pride has taken place for the last 20 years and to date has raised in excess of £200,000. It is a not-for-profit organisation, with money raised going to local LGBTQ charities and projects.

LGBT History Month co-founder receives MBE

Tony Fenwick, CEO of Schools Out UK, the founders of LGBT History Month, has been awarded an MBE at the request of the DfE for services to equality in education.

"I'm delighted and honoured to receive an MBE," says Tony, "but I regard it as an award for all of us at Schools Out UK who work as volunteers and give up our valuable time to make things happen.

"I have accepted the MBE as an acknowledgment that our work in education is being valued, and that our work for schools is making an impact.

"But I also hope to use the gong to lobby parliament to encourage the nations of the Commonwealth to get rid of the Empire's outdated legislation and legalise same-sex relations throughout their lands."



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Midlands organisations acknowledged in Stonewall Top 100 Employers List



Four organisations based in the West Midlands have been named top employers by LGBT charity Stonewall - Wolverhampton Homes, BNP Paribas Personal Finance (LaSer UK), the University of Birmingham and Birmingham City Council.

Stonewall's Top 100 Employers is the definitive list showcasing the best employers for lesbian, gay and bi staff. It is compiled from submissions to the Workplace Equality Index, a powerful benchmarking tool used by employers to create inclusive workplaces.

Wolverhampton Homes is the year's highest new entry for the West Midlands at number 63.

The University of Birmingham is at number 75, Birmingham City Council at number 82, and new entry from BNP Paribas, LaSer UK, is at number 98.

Meanwhile, over in the East Midlands, more organisations from the area than from any other region outside Greater London feature in this year's Top 100 Employers list.

A strong performance from the region's police forces sees Leicestershire Police top the list at number 15, followed by Nottinghamshire Police Headquarters, which has moved 29 places to number 35.

Top performers also include this year's highest climber, Vision West Nottinghamshire, who have moved 33 places to number 60. The highest new entry is Nottingham City Homes at number 89.

Notable performances also come from Leicestershire City Council at number 36 and De Montfort University, which moves up 19 places to number 39.

St Andrews Healthcare has climbed 15 places to number 43, Nottinghamshire County Council features at number 51 and Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service comes in at 99.

Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust remains a Star Performer in the East Midlands this year, following its consistently exemplary performance in the Index. This prestigious accolade is in recognition of the Trust's unwavering efforts to create inclusive workplaces 'where staff can bring their whole selves to work'.

Trump administration removes LGBT pages from White House website hours after inauguration



Within hours of Donald Trump being sworn in as the 45th President of the United States of America, his administration had removed pages mentioning LGBT rights from the White House website.

Barack Obama's administration had implemented a now-deleted section of the Whitehouse website for engagement with the LGBT community. This included a blog detailing policies and details about the White House's LGBT work.

Instead of replacing the page with details of Trump's policies, the LGBT section has simply vanished, along with other sections such as climate change and women's rights.

There is no mention of LGBT issues anywhere on the White House website.

Trump, who was sworn in on Friday 20 January, has never released a policy plan on LGBT issues, nor has he announced a policy plan on HIV/AIDS. He failed to detail policies on either issue during his election campaign.

Peter Tatchell at Wolverhampton university for LGBT History Month

As part of LGBT History Month, the University of Wolverhampton is hosting two events to help celebrate the life experiences of LGBT people in the UK and across the globe.

On Thursday 2 February, in association with the Black Staff Network as part of One World Film Festival, human rights activist and campaigner Peter Tatchell talks about the global struggle for LGBT rights. The event also includes an audience Q&A session and a special screening of an acclaimed documentary about the work of David Kato and

his fellow Uganda LGBT activists. On Wednesday 8 February, the School of Performing Arts drama students perform a condensed version of Alexi Kaye Campbell's award-winning play, *The Pride*, highlighting society's progression in terms of gay rights and equality. The performance is followed by a Q&A with Campbell. Further information can be obtained by emailing arenawlv.ac.uk or by phoning 01902 321 321. Free tickets can be reserved at wlv.ac.uk/arena-theatre.

Nick Hynan

Photography

Birmingham-based photographer

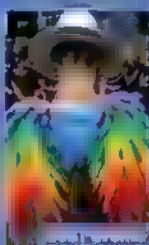
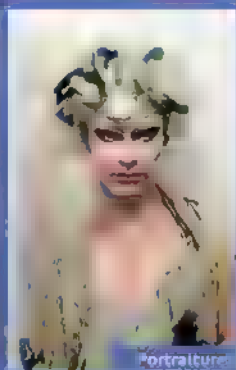
Nick Hynan has worked with the LGBT community for many years.

He brings a unique visual style and insight to his work with individuals and organisations across the region.

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Celts Narborough Road Sauna Clinic:

Day: Saturday 4th February

Time: 11am - 1:30pm

Place: 38 Narborough Road, Leicester LE3 0BG

City Celts Sauna Clinic:

Day: Mondays | Time: 4pm - 7pm

Day: Wednesdays | Time: 3pm - 5pm

Place: 33 New Bond Street, Leicester LE1 4RQ



Day: Thursdays

Time: 3pm - 6pm

Place: 61 Bedford Street, Leicester, LE1 3JR

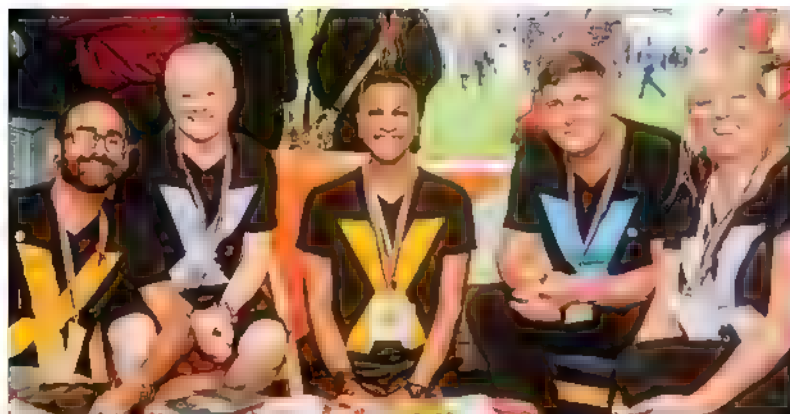


You can also check out Trade Sexual Health.

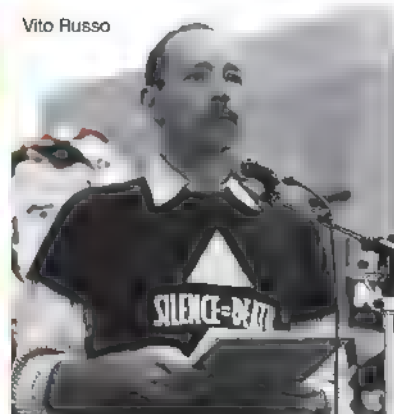
www.tradesexualhealth.com

Further information available
www.leicestersexualhealth.nhs.uk

Leicester sexual health charity Trade on the lookout for first-Thursday volunteers



Vito Russo



Leicester sexual health charity Trade is on the lookout for members of the general public who might be free to assist the organisation on the first Thursday of each month.

The charity needs people to help out with urgent tasks such as condom packing, sticker stacking and preparation for large events such as Leicester Pride.

The role provides a great opportunity to learn about volunteering, meet the Trade team and make new friends, all while helping to keep the organisation running smoothly. You don't need any special skills or training, you can stay for as long or short a time as you like, and everybody's welcome. Trade's next event is a screening of a documentary about the late gay rights activist

and writer Vito Russo, who's best known as the author of *The Celluloid Closet*. Described as 'an inspirational evening, with lots to do to help your local community', the event takes place on Thursday 2 February and is being held to celebrate LGBT History Month.

For more information about Trade's work, visit tradesexualhealth.com

Author in search of gay Muslim young adults for new book

Gay author and social worker Declan Henry is on the lookout for gay Muslim young adults for a new book he's currently writing.

The author, whose previous works include *Trans Voices* and *Becoming Who You Are*, is hoping to hear from Zone readers who are gay and Muslim, to elicit their views on

the subject of Islam and young adults.

Interviews for the project will be conducted via telephone, with confidentiality assured.

If you would like more information about the project, or would like to volunteer your time to contribute, email declanhenry@hotmail.com

Crowdfunding campaign gets underway to finance new gay bar & club in Dudley

A crowdfunding campaign is aiming to raise £20,000 for a new gay bar & club in Dudley.

The campaign - started by Christopher Marson and hosted on crowdfunding website Indiegogo - is looking to raise the funds to open up a new venue 'or the community to use without discrimination and create a safe environment'.

The venue, which will be called Bar Diva, already has many of the required fixtures and fittings in place, which ensures a small startup cost for investors.

For full information, visit indiegogo.com/projects/bar-diva-the-midlands-1-non-attitude-bar-gay-lgbt#.



Mark Ames

Founder of XXL
London

Born: Whitechapel, London

Star sign: Pisces

Age: 51

"Birmingham is a great city with lovely people and a really great Bear scene"

About Mark

Where did you grow up?

Tottenham, London.

Single or attached?

Attached

What makes you happy?

Seeing other people happy - I've always found a smile gets a smile in return.

What makes you sad?

The state of the environment and the thought of Theresa May and Donald Trump's love child - which would be the 51st state of America.

What makes you angry?

Of late, Brexit. Despite being of a right wing nature, I hang my head in despair. I don't see what we can gain in these times by leaving such a strong union. We were horrified and felt betrayed at the thought of losing Scotland - and yet we think it's okay to do it to Europe

If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?

Despite being a Piscean, I'm apparently influenced by Mars, which gives me a fiery disposition. So I'd say my fiery nature - it probably gets me into more trouble than it gets me out of.

What's been the most embarrassing thing you've done in your life?

I did a full-frontal nude photograph for Attitude magazine. It's embarrassing when people you know walk into the studio while the photo is being taken and say Oh, Mark! Thank God there was a bear to hand!

Coming Out

When did you first know you were gay?

When my wife named it in the divorce - up until then I was just inquisitive.

When did you come out?

After the divorce, when I was 21

What was school like for you as a gay teenager?

I wasn't gay - it was the other boys who sucked me who were gay! And then there was the embarrassing shower incident on a school ski trip with the PE teacher!

Who was the first person you told you were gay, and what was their reaction?

My old school friends, in a pub called Fagans. Two walked out, three said 'stop fucking around', one said 'that's really cool' and another asked me if I'd had sex with George Michael

What would you say to a youngster trying to come to terms with their own sexuality?

Embrace it. Declare it when you're ready, not others. Be prepared for things to change - and enjoy it.

Have you ever had any experiences with the opposite sex?

I have a son!

Your Career

When you were younger, what did you want to be?

A muthafuckin ballenna. Truthfully though, I always wanted to be in a band, or to be an entertainer of some sort

What was your first job when

you left school?

I was a carpenter with my stepdad.

How did XXL get started?

It was a combination of events. I'd been run over by an ex, so had fractured hands and couldn't work. I'd always had an ambition to open a club like XXL, and after meeting some people in Europe and talking to friends in London, I had my heart set on doing it. I subsequently met David, my former partner, and a combination of both the sad events, plus a gap in the market, saw XXL being born.

What's your role at XXL?

Chief motherfucking moaner and gafer.

What are the challenges in your job?

Finding new things to moan about to the staff!

What are the highlights?

Public BFs (Bear Fits). After 17 years, there are far too many incredible parties to pick out, but what's still a highlight for me is when an individual who you don't know comes up and says what a great party it is, or that they're having the time of their life.

Where do you see yourself in five years' time?

Probably locked up in a madhouse!

Any funny stories?

Far too rude to put into print. Pete Burns was compering, and he arrived with his partner, Michael, his ex-wife, driver and a Channel Four camera crew. He sat in the back office wearing a Vivian Westwood dress and a suede codpiece drank six bottles of Bollinger and ate two enormous pizzas. When Laurence Mallice of Trade fame walked in dressed as Willy Wonka (which had just been released at the time), Pete looked at him and in his legendary, acidic Liverpudlian accent said "Where's Aunt Sally, Worzel?", upon which we all fell on the floor laughing. Laurence was truly filled with malice that night!

Why did you choose Birmingham as the next destination for XXL?

It's a great city with lovely people

and a really great Bear scene. I've spoken to almost all the customers personally, either there or online, and the guys are great, honest and humble.

Gay Scene

How long have you been frequenting the Midlands gay scene?

XXL has been here for 14 years now. Before I brought XXL here, I used to personally frequent the scene on occasions when I visited several friends here.

What's been your fondest memory of the gay scene?

The Pride Ball. Birmingham may not be the country's capital, but the Pride Ball was the best scene event in the whole of the UK. It is sorely missed.

Who's your favourite cabaret act on the gay scene?

Myra Dubois.

Who's your favourite person on the gay scene?

Me, Myself and I - now where's that straightjacket?! There's no single person. I love 'most' of the people in our community who are not 'haters', but two groups really stand out at the moment. The gay rugby and football communities are really taking grass roots homophobia by the short and curries and making enormous gains for the LGBTQ community. I'm currently working very closely with the KXSFC and the London Titans, with sponsorship deals and promotions, and we're embracing all of the gay football and rugby teams with discounted entry to all the XXL parties.

What do you most enjoy about the gay scene?

The variety, uniqueness and individualism, married with the 'never knowing what's going to happen'. It's tirelessly recreating itself.

What have you noticed about the way the gay scene has changed over the years?

Apps and social media, and not for the better - and I have the XXL app. For me, socialising should be about physically meeting people - in bars, restaurants, cafes and clubs - not just online. Our physical social hubs are slowly



being lost because they aren't patronised.

How would you change the gay scene?

Close down Facebook, Twitter and all the apps. Does it need to be changed? It's evolving. If I could do anything, I would encourage more variety. Why is it everyone has to copy someone else's success? Go out and create something different - that's what we as a community have always been famous for.

Time Out

Where do you like to go on a night out?

That depends who's asking and who with! I can high roll - or low live. I'm happy when the company is happy.

What do you do to relax?

Gardening and scuba diving. I used to love taking my dogs for a

walk and spending quality time with them, but sadly I've lost them.

What do you enjoy on telly?

Penny Dreadful, Taboo, most documentaries on nature and politics.

What was the last album or track you bought?

Jack Johnson And Friends: Sing-A-Longs & Lullabies For The Film Curious George, and the remix of I Feel Love by Depeche Mode.

Which one website do you spend the most time on?

Facebook.

Which type of holiday do you prefer?

Adventure.

Quickfire

Who's your favourite actor?

Of the moment, Tom Hardy. Richard Burton.

What's your favourite book?

Robinson Crusoe.

Half empty or half full?

Half empty - I know a glass always needs filling.

What's your favourite food?

Cake.

And how about your favourite drink?

Tea.

Madonna or Lady Gaga?

Kylie or Donna Summer.

If you could take a selfie with one person, alive or dead, who would it be?

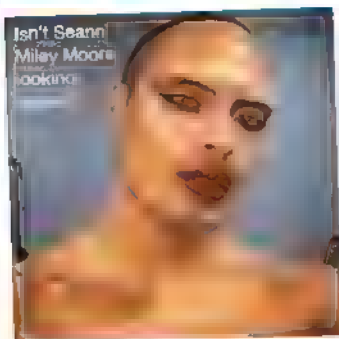
Gorbachev - I've already got one with Maggie! Seriously, though - Sylvia Earle. None of our politicians are doing a damn thing to save the planet, but this lady is amazing - she's a hero in every sense of the word.

THE VIRAL ROUND UP

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN LOOKING AT ONLINE...

CELEB SNAPS!

OUR FAVOURITE PICTURES FROM INSTAGRAM



Isn't Seann Miley Moore looking?



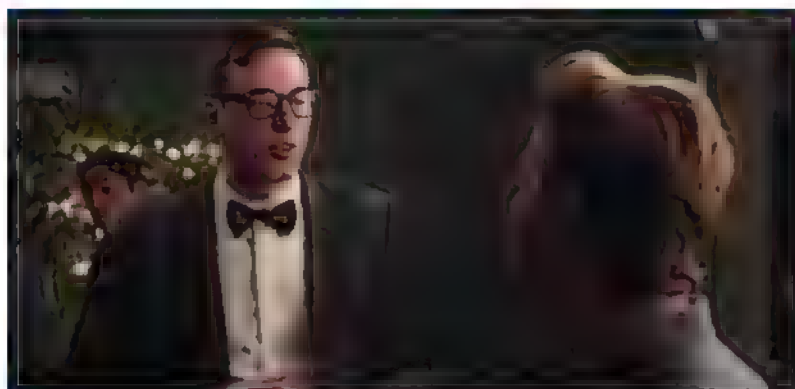
Our fave YouTuber Tyler Oakley looks deep in thought!



Gay Swedish footballer Anton Lysen looks super cute!

We all do it - spend hours on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. Often, we're distracted from what we should be doing by cat videos and funny pranks - or by something feelgood that's been shared so much on the net it's officially classed as 'viral'. Well, here are some of Midlands Zone's favourites from the past month!

Hilarious spy spoof sees agent using intel to find out: **"IS THAT HOT GUY GAY?"**



We're all partial to a bit of spy drama - especially when it's Daniel Craig's James Bond coming out of the sea in some pleasingly tight trunks - but we also love a good ol' spy spoof here at Midlands Zone!

American comedy YouTube channel College Humor has released a funny video that sees

an undercover agent using his intel team to find out if the hot guy he's talking to is gay - with quite humorous results

After discovering his answer using his 'super spy skills', he can then continue with his assigned task.

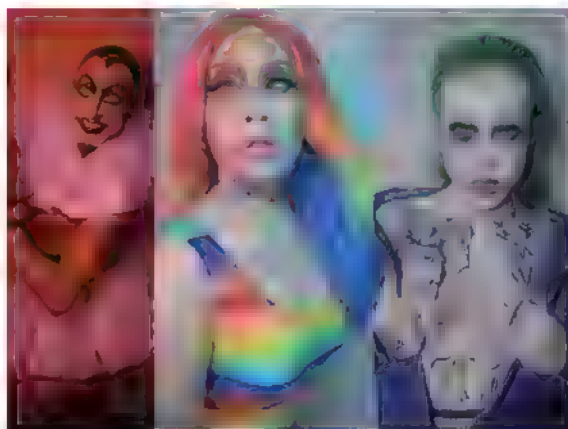
Watch it here: youtu.be/HetzOYLcF8

36 of the best pictures from **PHI O'HARA's** 365 Days of Drag

One of our favourite but often controversial RuPaul Drag Race stars has completed her 365 Days of Drag - and our friends over at Gay Star News have compiled 36 of her best looks.

From spooky Halloween costumes to My Little Pony and spectacular '80s and '90s cartoon characters, Phi Phi O'Hara had it covered - with amazing results!

Check out the 36 best costumes here: bit.ly/2k7IVeU



Try something different this
Valentine's Day...



Croissant?

It's not all about anal!

Find out what 'croissant' means as well as other terms
at www.thedictionary.co.uk

Email lgbt@ssotp.nhs.uk with your anal alternatives



ZONE

The Top 5 Finalists

After more than 8,400 votes were cast in Part One of the Readers' Awards, we're pleased to announce your top five finalists in each category. Online voting has now re-opened so that you can vote for your winner! Voting will continue right the way through until 28 February. All previous votes will be added to the new votes cast. Make sure you pick up a copy of the April issue of Midlands Zone, because that's where you'll see all of your winners! In the meantime, get voting now at www.midlandszone.co.uk

Best Birmingham Gay Nightclub

Top 5 Finalists

- Boltz
- Club Chic
- The Core
- Glamorous
- The Nightingale

Best Midlands Gay Nightclub (outside Birmingham)

Top 5 Finalists

- Gorgeous - Wolverhampton
- Gossip - Stoke-On-Trent
- Helsinki - Leicester
- The Lion - Walsall
- Rainbows - Coventry

Best Birmingham Gay Bar

Top 5 Finalists

- Eden
- The Fox
- The Loft
- Missing
- The Village Inn

Best Midlands Gay Bar (outside Birmingham)

Top 5 Finalists

- Dover Castle - Leicester
- The Lion - Walsall
- Pink - Stoke on Trent
- Rainbow & Dove - Leicester
- The White Hart - Wolverhampton

Best Midlands Community Gay Bar

Top 5 Finalists

- Dover Castle - Leicester
- Eden - Birmingham
- Equator - Birmingham
- The Fox - Birmingham
- The Wellington - Birmingham

Best Midlands Cafe Bar / Restaurant

Top 5 Finalists

- The Loft - Birmingham
- Rainbow & Dove - Leicester
- The Red Lion - Walsall
- Sidewalk - Birmingham
- The Wellington - Birmingham

Best Midlands Bar/Club for Men

Top 5 Finalists

- Boltz - Birmingham
- The Core - Birmingham
- Eden - Birmingham
- The Fountain Inn - Birmingham
- The Lion - Walsall

Best Midlands Bar/Club for Women

Top 5 Finalists

- The Fox - Birmingham
- Gorgeous - Wolverhampton
- Gossip - Stoke-on-Trent
- The Nightingale - Birmingham
- Sidewalk - Birmingham

Best Midlands Venue Outdoor Area

Top 5 Finalists

- Dover Castle - Leicester
- Eden - Birmingham
- The Lion - Walsall
- The Loft - Birmingham
- The Village Inn - Birmingham

Best Midlands New Venue / Pub

Top 5 Finalists

- Club Chic - Birmingham
- The Lion - Walsall
- The Loft - Birmingham
- Missing - Birmingham
- Sequin Show Stoppers - B'ham

Best Midlands venue Front of House Team

Top 5 Finalists

- The Boston - Northampton
- Dover Castle - Leicester
- Eden - Birmingham
- The Nightingale - Birmingham
- The Village Inn - Birmingham

Best Midlands venue Security Team

Top 5 Finalists

- Eden - Birmingham
- Gossip - Stoke-on-Trent
- Helsinki - Leicester
- Missing - Birmingham
- The Nightingale - Birmingham

Best OVERALL Birmingham Venue

Top 5 Finalists

- Eden
- The Loft Lounge
- Missing
- The Nightingale
- The Village Inn

Best OVERALL Midlands Venue (outside Birmingham)

Top 5 Finalists

- Dover Castle - Leicester
- Gorgeous - Wolverhampton
- Gossip - Stoke on Trent
- Helsinki - Leicester
- The Lion - Walsall

Best Midlands Venue One-Nighter

Top 5 Finalists

- Block Party @ Gorgeous - Wolverhampton
- Birmingham Fetish Men @ Eden - Birmingham
- Breakfast Club @ Club Chic - Birmingham
- So It Goes @ The Nightingale - Birmingham
- XXL @ The Core Club - Birmingham

Best Midlands Live Entertainment venue

Top 5 Finalists

- Dover Castle - Leicester
- Eden - Birmingham
- The Nightingale - Birmingham
- The Village Inn - Birmingham
- The White Hart - Wolverhampton

Scene Personality of the Year



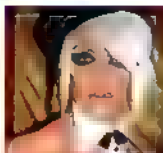
■ Garry Prentice



■ Lawrence Barton



■ Miss Penny

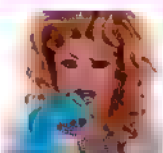


■ Marty Smith

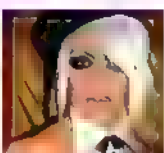


■ Cindy Edwards

Best Comper/Host in the Midlands



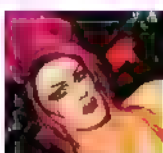
■ Miss Penny



■ Marty Smith



■ Twiggy



■ Charlotte the Harlotte



■ Queeny

DON'T FORGET!

You can still nominate your favourite people for

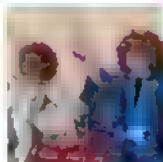
■ Youth Achievement

■ Outstanding Contribution

■ Lifetime Achievement

VOTE ONLINE AT
midlandszone.co.uk
 VOTING CLOSING
TUES 28 FEB 2017

Best Cabaret Act in the Midlands



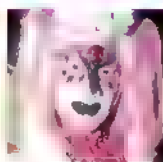
■ Glitter Lips



■ Miss Penny



■ Laqueefa



■ Twiggy

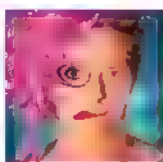


■ Vicky Jackson

Best National Cabaret Act



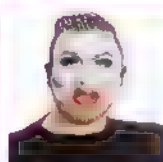
■ La Voix



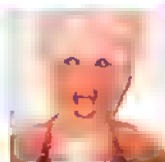
■ DE Experience



■ Sandra

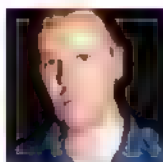


■ Danny Beard

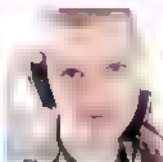


■ Drag With No Name

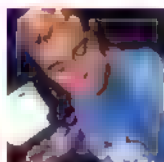
Best Midlands Bar DJ



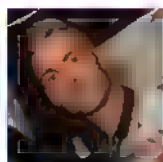
■ Dan Williams
- Eden



■ Deano Trickett
- The Village Inn



■ Mike Emery
- Missing



■ Richard Moon
- The Village Inn

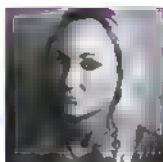


■ Laqueefa
- The Fox

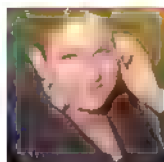
Best Midlands Club DJ



■ Rob Lambeth
- Helsinki



■ Lisa Sharred
- The Nightingale



■ Corey Hadley
- The Nightingale



■ Shaun Baxter
- Gorgeous



■ Paul Morrell
- JOL (The Core)

Best Midlands Pride Event

Top 5 Finalists

- Birmingham Pride
- Coventry Pride
- Leicester Pride
- Stoke-On-Trent Pride
- Walsall Pride

Best Midlands LGBT Event

Top 5 Finalists

- L Fest, Staffordshire
- Picnic in the Park, Birmingham
- Pride in Sport, Birmingham
- Rainbow Film Festival, S'bury
- SHOUT Festival, Birmingham

Best LGBT Charity or Group of Achievement

Top 5 Finalists

- Birmingham LGBT (Umbrella)
- Educate & Celebrate
- LGBT Network Wolverhampton
- Terrence Higgins Trust
- Trade Sexual Health

Best LGBT Sport or Social Group

Top 5 Finalists

- Acting Out
- BGSO
- Birmingham Blaze FC
- Birmingham Swifts
- Leicester Wildcats

Best Midlands Health Club / Sauna

Top 5 Finalists

- CS2 - Nottingham
- The Greenhouse - Darlaston
- Splash - Leicester
- Spartan - Birmingham
- Unit 2 - Birmingham

Best LGBT-Friendly Online or Retail Store

Top 5 Finalists

- Clonezone - Birmingham
- John Lewis - Birmingham
- DSU Underwear - Online
- Sequin Show Stoppers - B'ham
- Selfridges - Birmingham

Best Front of House Person

Top 5 Finalists:

- Jack Owen - Missing
- Garry Prentice - Eden
- Hill Fletcher - The Fox
- Lazlo Hollo - Eden
- Dale Murphy - Gorgeous

Best Security Person

Top 5 Finalists

- Dom Dawes - The Nightingale
- Jermaine Holder - Eden
- Macawley Brazzill - The Lion
- Lisa Wallace - The Fox
- Kevin Pearson - The Village Inn

**WIN
£1,000!**

To enter the free prize draw for £1,000, simply VOTE and then complete our Readership Survey and we'll select a lucky winner at random!

VOTE ONLINE AT: **www.midlandszone.co.uk**



IT STARTS WITH ME.

DID YOU KNOW?

**YOU CAN RECEIVE A FREE
AND CONFIDENTIAL HIV
HOME TEST KIT**

Visit: <https://www.test.hiv/>



Shropshire Sexual Health Services on 0300 123 0994

FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN STOP HIV AT:

StartsWithMe.org.uk

01

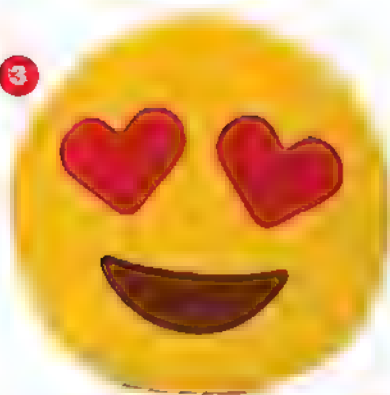
Just a chick'n

love with
another chick.

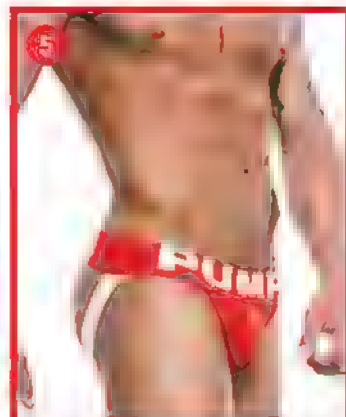
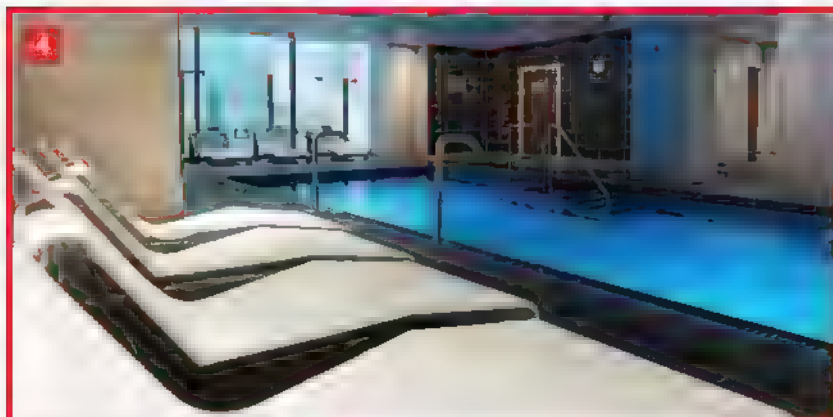
02



03



SINGLE?



It Must Be Love...

Some great gifts to give on Valentine's Day!

01 Funny Lesbian Card

Two cute chicks in love? Sounds like a dream come true, totally worth celebrating! Send her this sweet little Valentine's Day card. Left blank inside for you to write an adorable message

£3.50
etsy.com

02 Tommy Hilfiger Men's Charlie Watch

Treat someone special to this classic watch from Tommy Hilfiger. The watch is water-resistant up to 50 metres and features a black leather strap

From £150.00
menkind.co.uk

03 Heart Eyes Emoji Pillow

Do you often send the heart eyes emoji on WhatsApp or iMessage to your loved one? If so, why not purchase your favourite emoji... as a cushion! Emoji cushions are perfect for the home, or as a gift for that special person

£11.99
emojishop.co.uk

04 Spa Day for Two

Chill out at Birmingham's Club & Spa. The day includes a Spa Rasul treatment - complete with signature salt scrub and seasonal muds - a two-course lunch at Bar Dolino's and a 25-minute back, neck and shoulder massage in a dual room.

theclubandspa
birmingham.co.uk

05 PUMP! Jock

If you're after something a bit kinkier for the guy in your life - then this PUMP! red cotton stretch sports jock strap is just the thing! It's made with a soft wide branded elastic waistband and stretch contoured pouch.

bangandstrike.com

SINGLE? Grindr

If you're likely to be spending Valentine's Day alone, check out Grindr - the massively popular gay dating app!

FREE

CAM4

**NEED SOME
EXTRA CASH?**

CAM4.com



Earn up to £7,000 Per Month

Sign up, click broadcast, and start earning today!



GREAT GADGETS

The latest tech and accessories!

01 GoPro Karma

Convert your GoPro HERO5 Black into a fully integrated aerial imaging tool with the Karma Quadcopter with Harness for HERO5 Black. This compact, folding drone can stay aloft for up to 20 minutes and features a detachable gimbal stabiliser that will help keep your footage silky smooth. Karma includes an intelligent, game-style controller with a flip-up touchscreen for complete control over the HERO5 Black, as well as the ability to view a live camera feed.

Coming Soon
gopro.com

02 Nintendo Switch

In addition to providing single and multiplayer thrills at home, the Nintendo Switch system also enables gamers to play the same title wherever, whenever and with whoever they choose. The mobility of a handheld is now added to the power of a home gaming system to enable unprecedented new video game play styles.

From £279.99
game.co.uk

03 W3 Stand for Apple Watch

View your Apple Watch display through a blast from the past. The display lines up perfectly to seem as though it's the display of an old Apple monitor. Simply place your Apple Watch on the stand to charge your watch, keep this stand near your bed to allow use of key functions such as alarm clocks and messages.

£14.99
elagostore.com

04 Nikon KeyMission 360

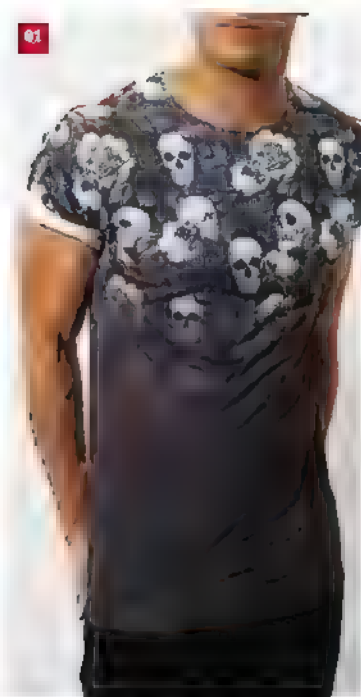
When it comes to immersive video, this mountable action camera is the real deal. Equipped with two bright, ultra-wide-angle NIKKOR lenses and two CMOS image sensors, it delivers spherical 360° 4K UHD1 footage and 23.9 MP photos with no blind spots. Every possible vantage point is covered and no terrain is off limits. Dedicated mounts leave you hands-free, and the camera is waterproof to 30m without separate housing.

From £419.00
amazon.co.uk

05 Super Mario Run

A new kind of Mario game you can play with one hand. Mario constantly runs forward while you time your taps to pull off stylish jumps and moves to gather coins and reach the goal. Super Mario Run can be downloaded for free, letting you sample all the game modes. And after you purchase the game, you'll be able to fully play all the modes, with no additional payment required.

Free - £7.99
iOS App Store
(Android version coming soon)



SPRING FORWARD FASHION

01 Black Faded Floral Skull Print T-shirt

£15.00

riverisland.com

02 Pink Velour Oversized T-shirt

£20.00

topman.com

03 White & Blue Geo Print Muscle Fit T-shirt

£18.00

riverisland.com

04 HOUSE OF HOLLAND X UMBRO
Diamond Sweatshirt

£93.00

topman.com

05 Black Contrast Trim Hi-Top Trainers

£11.00

newlook.com

06 KOMONO Winston Regal Purple
Leather Watch

£100.00

topman.com

07 Dark Blue Distressed Skinny Jeans

£29.00

newlook.com

Artistic Performance

STEPMOTHER/ STEPFATHER

Thursday 16 -
Friday 17 Feb, 8pm

International scenes of violence

*...horribly
entertaining. A very
dark treat indeed"*

★★★★★

THE OBSERVER

Artistic Performance

2010 Winner

Best New

Tanzwa

AFRICARMEN

A new interpretation of the Carmen story

Friday 9 Mar, 8pm

*"a pure,
unadulterated
delight"*

EXEUNT

Lee & Moreno

A ROOM FOR ALL OUR TOMORROWS

Thursday 23 Mar, 8pm

Artistic Performance

ROSALIND

*Shakespeare's
hermeneutic journey*

Thursday 6 - Friday 7 Apr

DanceXchange at The Patrick Centre, Birmingham Hippodrome

0844 338 5000 dancexchange.org.uk

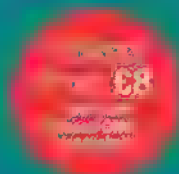


ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND



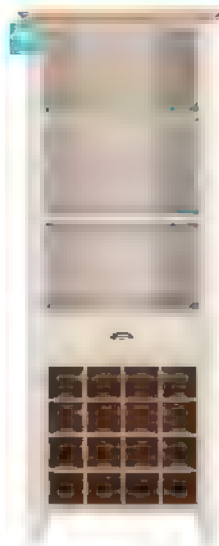
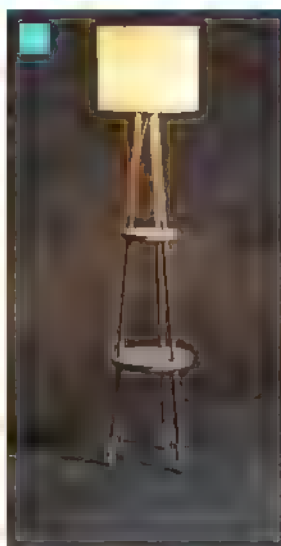
Birmingham
City Council

dx registered charity no. 1045364





HOME COMFORTS



01 Sidmouth
Cream Sideboard
£239.20
dunelm.com

02 Harrington
Sofa
From £1,025
next.co.uk

03 Westcott
Double Bed
£675.00
next.co.uk

04 Eaton Soft Grey
Extending Dining Table
£775.00 - £899.00
dunelm.com

05 Shelves Floor
Lamp
£149.00
marksandspencer.com

06 Padstow Wine
Rack
£599.00
marksandspencer.com



Tuesday 6
 Sat 10 Jun
 From £17

Sat 6 May £18.50



Calls cost 4.5p per min plus access charge. 5% transaction charge applies excluding cash sales in person.

7 TOP GROOMING TIPS

Do you need to up your grooming routine?

So we're into the second month of the year and we're struggling to keep to our New Year's Resolutions. Are you? Well fear not, you can simply start again - or maybe implement a new one. Most of us react to the need to groom, rather than keeping on top of it. So here are several tips to help you up your game and keep you looking sharp in between haircuts...

Unkempt beards

Of course, there's nothing wrong with beards - but let's not leave them messy! Ideally, you'll want to spend some time each day trimming the edges into shape. It's nothing too fancy or difficult - just go lightly over the edges with a trimmer and comb. Make sure it's a uniform length and the outline is nice and crisp.

Poorly groomed stubble

If you're not one for a beard but like to sport stubble instead, this tip is for you. Studies have shown that men with stubble are deemed more attractive than those who are clean-shaven. To make

stubble work, you need to keep it trim. To avoid looking scruffy, use a stubble guard (yes, they exist) or a shorter setting on your hair trimmer.

Eye up your eyebrows

We're not nit-picking here - our eyebrows need attention! Our eyebrows are actually one of our most important features, and we use them to express a wide range of emotions. This makes it even more important to tackle them before they get out of control. Of course,

there's eyebrow threading but if you don't want to go that far, you can always implement a DIY method at home. Use a pair of tweezers to carefully tidy up the outline of each brow and the area above the bridge of your nose.

Nose hair

Nose hair - gross, right? Yes it is, but luckily it's also easy to maintain and will literally take seconds. If your trimmer has a nose-hair attachment, pop it

on! Trim your nose hair back so that nobody can see those nasty, stray hairs. Especially you tall guys - shorter people will be looking up at you!

Ear hair

This is pretty much the same as your nose hair. Ear hair is unsightly but only takes a minute to tidy up. Do it every few days or every couple of weeks; it's well worth the time. You don't need to dig deep into the ear - just

go around the opening

Hairy necks

When you get your hair cut, do you ever see how much attention your hairdresser or barber pays to the back of your neck? Well that's because hairy necks aren't nice. With your trimmer, you only need to take 30 seconds every day or so to keep it trim and tidy.

Hair over the ears

If your hair is at the length where it's starting to invade your ears, then it's time to either visit the hairdresser or sort it out yourself. When trimming it, your whole ear should be visible. Decent trimmers tend to have guide combs that will help blend in your hair



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2017 THEME:
Love & Pride

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the decriminalisation of homosexuality
1967-2017



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That's Entertainment!

This month's hot DVD, music and book releases...

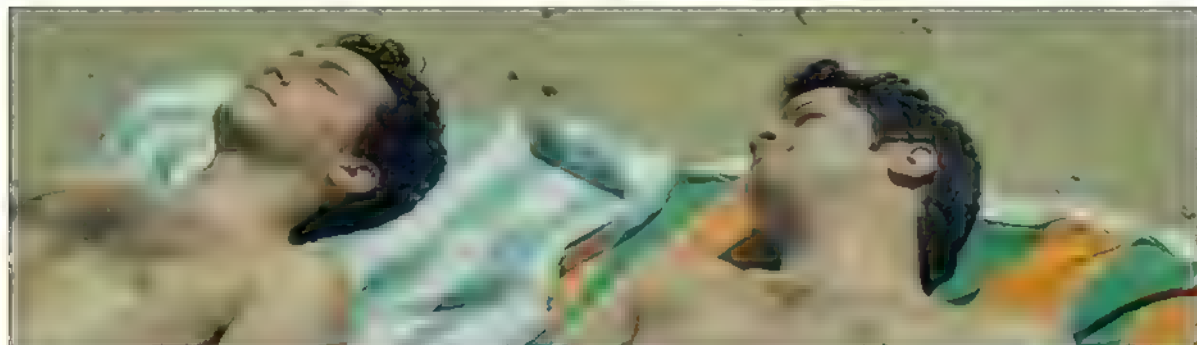
DVD BROMANCE 18

When four friends go on a camping trip in a remote part of Argentina, sexual tensions quickly bubble to the surface.

Once in virtual seclusion by the beach, Juli (the only girl) quickly recognises that the boys seem to have a closer-than-normal relationship. The line between friendship and love fades further for two

of the guys in particular, as their desire becomes too much to bear. When what started as a simple getaway quickly becomes tinged with sex, romance and conflict, everyone is forced to confront who they really are for the very first time.

Released Monday 27 February



DVD A LITTLE LUST 15

Sixteen-year-old Rocco's two aims in life are to get laid and to see his favourite pop star in concert with his best friends, sassy and tomboyish Mana and nerdy and quiet Mauri.

When a bullying incident at school forces Rocco to come out to his divorced middle-class parents, their liberal leanings are severely tested. Luckily his two friends stand by him, joining him in running away from home (in his parents' stolen car) to see their favourite singer in concert. But hot on their heels is his neurotic mother and eccentric gran...

A vibrant and funny coming-out tale

Released Monday 13 March



MUSIC LISTEN WITHOUT PREJUDICE 25

by George Michael

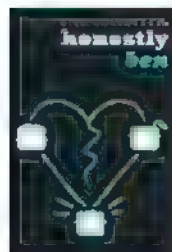


Listen Without Prejudice Vol 1 was George Michael's second solo album, after Faith. Originally released in 1990, it went straight to Number One in the UK and featured the timeless singles Praying For Time, Freedom! '90, Waiting For That Day, Cowboys And Angels and Heal The Pain.

Listen Without Prejudice 25 is a celebration of this iconic album.

Available for the very first time as part of this two-disc set is MTV Unplugged - the previously unreleased album. Recorded in 1996, it's one of George's finest performances and features songs from Wham!, Faith, Listen Without Prejudice and Older.

BOOK HONESTLY BEN by Bill Konigsberg



In Bill Konigsberg's follow-up to the fantastic Openly Straight, Ben Carver is back to normal. He's working steadily in his classes at the Natick School. He just got elected captain of the baseball team. He's even won a full scholarship to college - if he can keep up his grades. All that foolishness with Rafe Goldberg during the last semester is very much in the past.

Except... There's Hannah, the gorgeous girl from the neighbouring school, who attracts him and distracts him. There's his mother, whose quiet unhappiness Ben is noticing for the first time. School is harder, the pressure greater, the scholarship almost slipping away. And then there's Rafe - funny, kind, dating someone else and maybe the real 'normal' that Ben needs.

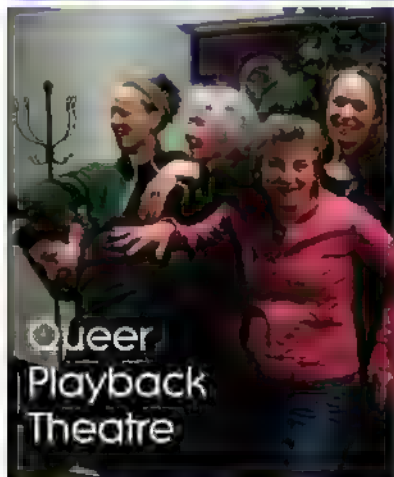
BACK IN TIME 2

17 - 19 FEBRUARY 2017

THE
NATIONAL FESTIVAL
of

LEST HISTORY

Shrewsbury



launch night

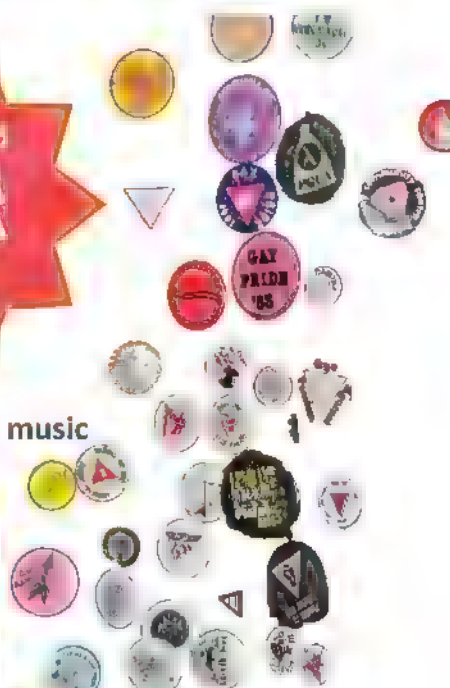
cabaret

another awesome projection

young people's showcase

exhibition

films



faster presentations

Tales of Hidden Heroes

Salop Assizes 1949

Trailblazing Transgender Service in the Military

Trans representation and gender expression in rock music

Heroic Architects of the 1967 Act

The Joy of Tokenism

Soldiers in Love

Punting with Pride

The History of Schools Out

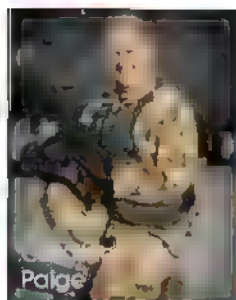
Frances & Mary



Mark
Bunyan



Lisa
Power



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Saturday daytime events are FREE - just turn up

check the website for full details of all events as they arise

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ZONE hotlist

THIS MONTH'S HOT EVENTS & THINGS TO SEE AND DO



1 PET SHOP BOYS

Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham,
Fri 24 February

Having formed in London in 1981, English electronic pop duo Pet Shop Boys features Neil Tennant (main vocals, keyboards, occasional guitar) and Chris Lowe (keyboards, occasional vocals). Not only are they listed in the Guinness Book of Records as the most successful duo in UK music history, they've also bagged three Brit Awards, six Grammy nominations and, since 1985, 42 Top 30 singles and 22 Top 10 hits in the UK Singles Chart, including four number ones.

This month sees the pair return to Birmingham to perform a set that features songs from their acclaimed new album, *Super*, and classic hits and album tracks from the past 30 years.

2 BIANCA DEL RIO

Symphony Hall,
Birmingham,
Mon 6 February

Bianca Del Rio is back with a bang! The Season Six winner of RuPaul's Drag Race and a self-professed 'clown in a gown', Bianca (aka Roy Haylock) brings her stand-up show, *Not Today Satan*, to the UK for the first ever time.

The hilariously hateful comic is known for her foul mouth and unabapiogetic humour, the *New York Times* calling her 'the Joan Rivers of the drag world'.

"When I'm not busy volunteering at the soup kitchen or knitting socks for orphans," says Bianca, "one of my favourite pastimes is gathering the cold, huddled masses into a nice warm room, giving them shelter if only for an hour, and sharing the valuable life advice of a hate guru!"



3

THE RED SHOES

Birmingham Hippodrome

Tues 7 - Sat 11 February & Wed 19 - Sat 22 July

Widely regarded as the greatest dance film ever made, *The Red Shoes* is inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale about a pair of enchanted shoes that force their wearer to dance until she dies.

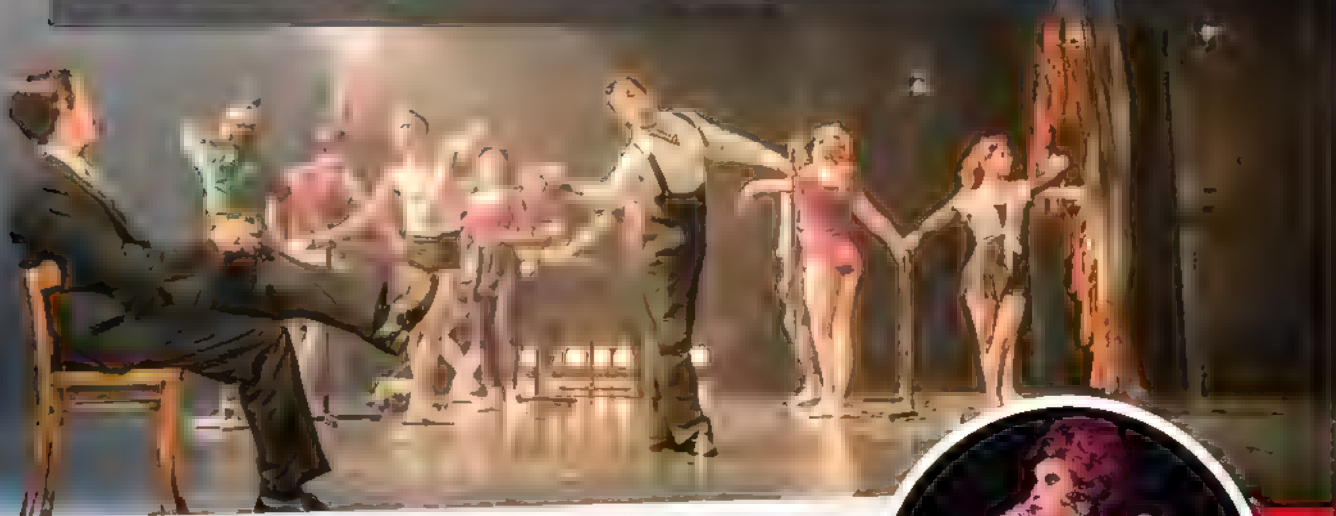
The film's story centres on young ballerina and star in the making Vicky Page. When Vicky joins the ballet company's charismatic composer, Julian Craye, the jealous Lermontov forces her to choose between love and her career, leading to a heartbreak for Vicky, dancing is as much a necessity as living.

In a sumptuous new adaptation visiting Birmingham this month, and returning in July, Matthew Bourne reinvents the movie's story live on stage.

"We have several little ballets in the piece," reveals Matthew. "There's a beach ballet, which creates a link to the actual beach when they visit Monte Carlo. We also have what we call the 'Good vs Evil' ballet, which reflects the atmosphere of what's going on in the story at that point. That's based on a famously barefoot ballerina, Frederick Ashton did called Dante's Sonata.

We also do a bit of Les Sylphides, and then there's a big, grand, glamorous, waltzy ballet near the beginning to represent the world Vicky wants to be a part of.

"So it's almost like watching a bit of dance history - you can see all the references."



4

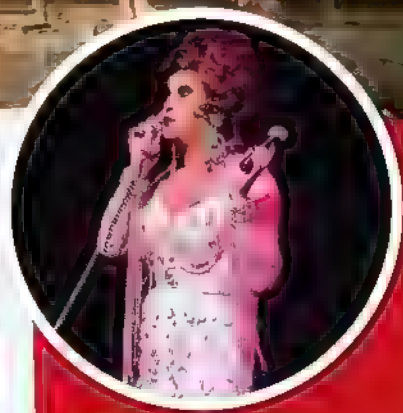
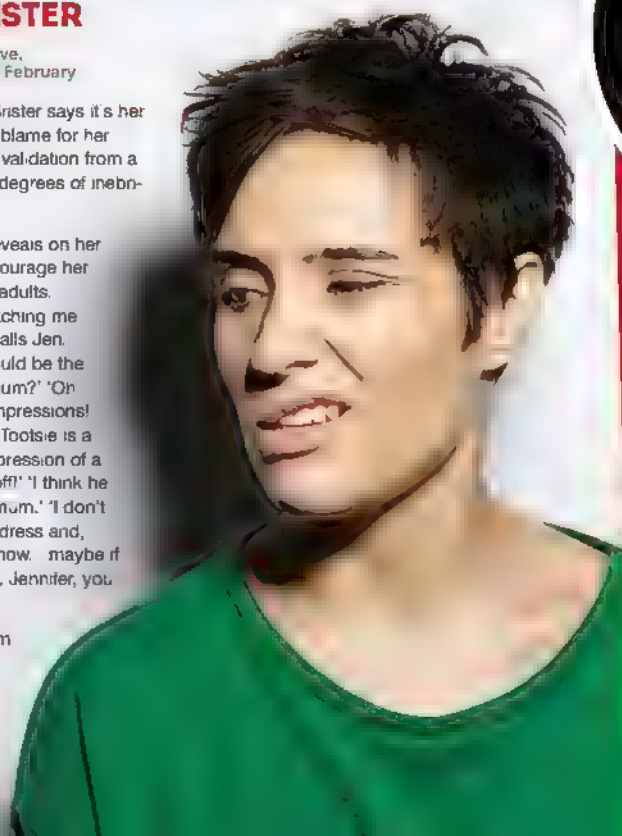
JEN BRISTER

Artrix Bromsgrove,
Thurs 23 - Fri 24 February

Rising star Jen Brister says it's her mother who's to blame for her overwhelming need "to seek validation from a roomful of people in varying degrees of inebriation".

When Jen was young, she reveals on her website, her mum would encourage her to do impressions in front of adults. "All the while, my mum is watching me and beaming with pride," recalls Jen. "Jennifer," she'd say, "you could be the next Meryl Streep!" "Really, mum?" "Oh yes, every actor starts with impressions! Just look at Dustin Hoffman. Tootsie is a very good film. He did an impression of a woman and his career took off!" "I think he was famous before Tootsie, mum." "I don't think so - I think he put on a dress and, poof!, he was famous. You know, maybe if you wore a dress sometimes, Jennifer, you could get famous too..."

"At this stage in my career, I'm willing to try anything, so thanks, mum!"



5

CERI DUPREE

Curve, Leicester,
Wed 1 - Sat 4 February

The faaaaaabulous Ceri Dupree is back on the road with his one-man 21-woman show.

A glamorous evening of hysterical comedy, amazing vocal impersonations and jaw-dropping, eye-popping costumes could see you meeting Adele, Cher, Joan Collins, Lady Gaga, Björk, Shirley Bassey, Camilla and even the Queen!

Ceri lovingly brings them all to life with a touch of Las Vegas class rarely seen in the UK today.



6

RICHARD GADD

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry
Sun 19 February

It says much about Richard Gadd's talent that he was able to score a big success at last summer's Edinburgh Fringe with a stand-up show he'd felt compelled to write as a result of experiencing a sexual assault.

Managing to generate humour from so dark a starting point is no mean feat, and speaks volumes for the progress Gadd feels he's made since the incident changed his life five years ago.

"I'm the man playing football twice a week with my football pals," he explained to the Guardian. "I thought of myself as a man, and I felt like that was taken from me, and I'm ashamed of that now. But I felt like that was the story I wanted and I needed to tell with this show."

8

SUE PERKINS

De Montfort Hall, Leicester,
Sat 18 February

Join Sue for an evening of 'sparkling wit, tall tales and a user's guide to Mary Berry'

Sue is best known for being one half of double act Mel And Sue. In 2008, she won the BBC show *Maestro*, culminating in her conducting at The Last Night Of The Proms. She's created the acclaimed travel documentary, *The Mekong River With Sue Perkins*, hosts the shows *Insert Name Here* and *Spelling Bee*, and is a regular contributor to *Have I Got News For You*, *Just A Minute*, *QI* and *The News Quiz*. Oh, and that cake series which used to be on BBC One...

Her Leicester show is based on her best-selling memoir, *Spectacles*.



7 MOONLIGHT

Starring Trevante Rhodes,
Andre Holland, Janelle
Mon e, Ashton Sanders,
Jharrel Jerome, Naomie
Harris, Mahershala Ali

Directed by Barry Jenkins (USA)

You don't come across a film like *Moonlight* very often. Not only does it exhibit a very distinctive directorial style but a narrative that matches it for originality.

Set on the mean streets of Miami, the film focuses on one individual, Chiron. Chiron doesn't speak much but digests the world around him - which is not a nice place. His mother is a crack-smoking prostitute, his saviour a drug dealer and his best

friend somebody he shouldn't really trust.

Director Barry Jenkins divides his film into three parts, each revealing a different aspect of our protagonist, titled 'Little,' 'Chiron' and 'Black.' As such, it is a fictitious biography of a black man and how he comes to be who he is. Here there are good people who do bad things and bad people who do good things. The performances are excellent across the board although as Chiron's mother - as much a victim as her son - Naomie Harris is terrific. On the evidence here, it's hard to believe the actress ever played Miss Moneybags. The film itself won the Golden Globe for best drama.

Released Fri 17 February



9 SISTER ACT

Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton, Mon 27 February - Sat 4 March;
Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 8 - Sat 13 May

Based on the hit Whoopi Goldberg movie, this stage musical, directed and choreographed by Craig Revel Horwood, sees Alexandra Burke taking the Goldberg role of Reno lounge singer Deloris Van Cartier.

After seeing her gangster boyfriend kill an employee, Deloris is placed on a witness protection programme and hidden in a convent, where she takes over the rehearsals of the in-house choir of nuns. Thanks to her musical expertise, the choir become a huge success and church attendances go through the roof. But in giving the church a new lease of life, Deloris may inadvertently have jeopardised her own safety.

A fun-filled spectacular of a show with a real feelgood factor, this is a truly divine comedy that's well worth worshipping.



WIN! A pair of aussieBum Samurai Hipster pants

We've got a pair of the all-new aussieBum Samurai Hipster Trunks to give away to one lucky reader!

Explore your inner warrior with aussieBum's new 'Samurai' undies. Inspired by ancient martial arts, and built with ultimate performance in mind, Samurai's ultra-soft microfibre composition will keep you in maximum comfort in even the most extreme conditions, while the sports engineered waistband gives you the extra support to defeat all challengers. Available in two limited edition colours 'Zen' and 'Warrior'. These sexy trunks cost just £15.25 from aussiebum.com

To enter this amazing competition, all you need to do is visit midlandszone.co.uk and answer this simple question

Which country would you often associate a Samurai with?

- A) Japan
- B) France
- C) Germany

To enter this competition, simply visit midlandszone.co.uk before Tuesday 28 February

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WHAT'S ON IN YOUR LOCAL GAY VENUES

OUT

12 JANUARY 2012



JOANNE THE SCAMMER

GETS READY TO SCAM THE MIDLANDS!

CABARET FUN IN BRUM

Fun-filled cabaret magic hits Birmingham's gay village!

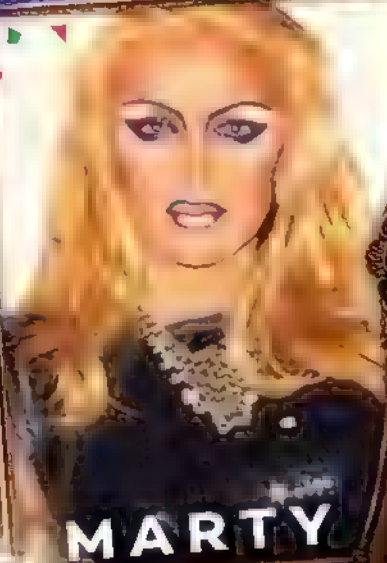
XXL RETURNS TO BRUM

The hugely popular men's club night returns to The Core Club

CHARLIE HIDES

Much-loved impressionist set to star at Birmingham bar

EVERY SUNDAY
8PM-3AM



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MARTY & TILLY'S PARTY!
FUN & FROLICS... GAMES & GIVEAWAYS...

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Viral sensation **JOANNE THE SCAMMER** heads to Birmingham



Joanne the Scammer is heading to the UK for the first time, so you'd better be wary of getting scammed whilst she's in Birmingham this month!

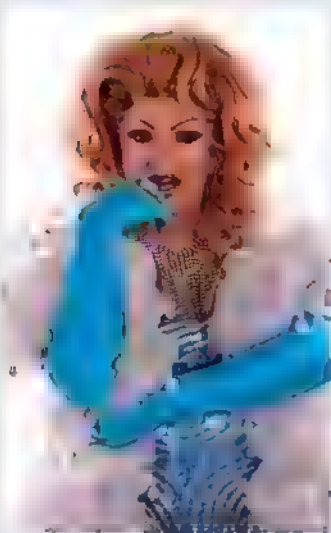
A self-professed "messy bitch who lives for drama", Joanne is a viral sensation taking social media by storm over the past year and even playing a part in the MTV Video Music Awards in 2016.

She's usually found in her trademark fur coat, putting on her 'caucasian' accent and bragging about antics that include extortion, embezzlement and embarrassing her ex-boyfriend's new wife!

If you're a fan of Joanne, she's at The Nightingale Club on Saturday 25 February, and will even be sticking around for a meet-and-greet afterwards!

THE NIGHTINGALE CLUB - BIRMINGHAM

FRIDAY NIGHT CABARET every week at popular Birmingham bar



If you're out and about in Birmingham on a Friday night and looking for great cabaret to enjoy, look no further than the Village Inn.

Kicking off the venue's February line-up is Drag With No Name on Friday the 3rd. The following week sees Miss Jason dropping in, followed by Miss Penny the week after. Friday the 24th sees the one and only Sandra heading back to the venue, to see you into March!

THE VILLAGE INN - BIRMINGHAM

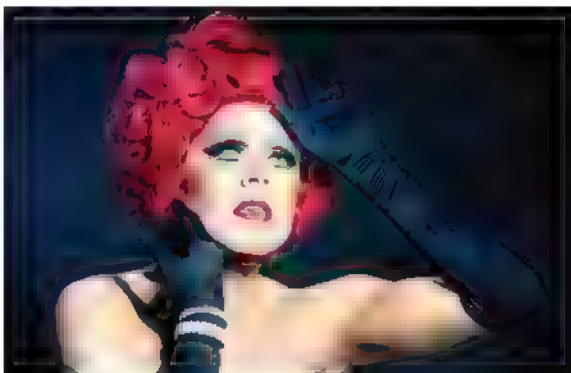
Britain's Got Talent semi-finalist **LA VOIX** makes a welcome return to Brum's Eden Bar

A true customer cabaret favourite is returning to Birmingham gay bar Eden this month.

La Voix, who reached the mighty heights of the Britain's Got Talent semi-finals, will be appearing at the popular Brum venue on Saturday 11 February.

If you've not managed to see her show before, you really are missing out, so be sure to get down to Eden and catch her this month!

EDEN - BIRMINGHAM



XXL BIRMINGHAM brings all the boys (and bears) to the yard...

Men-only club night XXL returns to Birmingham this month - and it promises to be as good as ever!

The award-winning club night, taking place on the third Friday of every month (17 February), features resident DJ Paul Morrell playing the biggest hits and remixes to

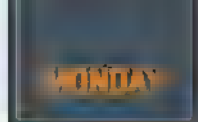
get the dancefloor packed

Oh, and if you fancy making your night out that little bit hotter, don't forget there's a dark room upstairs!

If you've never been before, why not check it out this month?

THE LOBBY - BIRMINGHAM





February

6 13 20 27

BIRMINGHAM

BUY ONE GET ONE FREE PIZZA

Every Monday.

THE LOFT

MINISTRY OF POUND - with DJ Mike Emery from 9pm. Selected drinks £1. Open until 2am.

Missing Bar

BINGO - Bingo with Queeny. **THE VILLAGE INN**

SUGAR RUSH - £2 entry
NIGHTINGALE CLUB

MONDAY MADNESS

BAR JESTER

OUTSKIRTS

BAR JESTER

PINK

SIDEWALK

WEST MIDLANDS

FABULOUS Featuring resident DJ Col. playing the best in chart hits camp tunes and more. Live

cabaret every 1st Monday of the month. **Mon 6 February** - Fanny Bums. Free admission before midnight and just £3 after.
C:21, SHREWSBURY

THE MONDAY CLUB - 9pm-5am - Student night. Everything is £2 (Shots £1) with DJ Lee Edward.
GORGEOUS, WOLVERHAMPTON

CHILL NIGHT
THREE FURNACES, TELFORD

GET THE PARTY STARTED Free
with DJ Foxv Divin
Open 5pm-4am
GOSSIP, STOKE ON TRENT

STUDENT NIGHT
PINK, STOKE ON TRENT

EAST MIDLANDS

2 TILL 2
a friendly atmos

THE BOSTON, NORTHAMPTON

DISCO
NEW FORESTERS, NOTTINGHAM

TUESDAY

February

7 14 21 28

BIRMINGHAM

90'S NIGHT - Every Tuesday night
10.30pm-3am
NIGHTINGALE CLUB

BOGOF TUESDAY - Buy any and sea or field plate and get one free
THE LOFT

DOCKLAN STAR SUPERSTAR - your host karaoke temptress, Gavina. Party starts at 9pm till late
Missing Bar

OPEN YOUR SNATCH - Songs, Games & Prizes with Miss Penny.
THE VILLAGE INN

TUNE UP TUESDAY



BAR JESTER

WEST MIDLANDS

B:G TUESDAY NIGHT PARTY

THE LION BAR & CLUB, WALSALL

CAMP QUIZ

THREE FURNACES, TELFORD

VELVET, WORCESTER

FLAUNT

BREWERY TAP, WORCESTER

SKYE'S PARTY NIGHT - DJ and host
ess. 5pm-11pm

THE WHITE HART, WOLVERHAMPTON

TWISTED TUESDAYS

RAINBOWS,
COVENTRY

EAST MIDLANDS

2 TILL 2
a friendly atmos

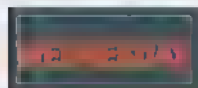
THE BOSTON, NORTHAMPTON

CHILL OUT NIGHT

NEW FORESTERS, NOTTINGHAM

GAMES NIGHT

DOVER CASTLE, LEICESTER



February

1 8 15 22

BIRMINGHAM

ROAST DINNER - Get a Sunday Roast - on a Wednesday! It's a game changing concept.
THE LOFT

2 GOOD 2 MISS - Drinks from just £2 with DJ Mike Emery. **Missing Bar**

KILLER KARAOKE - with Charlotte the Harriote
THE VILLAGE INN

2 FOR 1 COCKTAILS

SIDEWALK

DADDY'S DEALS AND FREE POOL
Open 7-11pm
THE FOX

WACKY WEDNESDAYS - Hosted
Marie James with DJ

BAR JESTER

WEDNESDAY LINE - Line Dancing
every wed nig
THE WELLINGTON

WEST MIDLANDS

DISCO & DJ - with G

RAINBOWS, COVENTRY

STUDENT NIGHT

THREE FURNACES, TELFORD

WACKY WEDNESDAYS

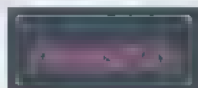
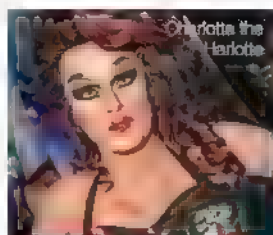
RAINBOWS, COVENTRY

EAST MIDLANDS

from 8pm till 11pm
THE BOSTON, NORTHAMPTON

GAMES NIGHT
2pm

NEW FORESTERS, NOTTINGHAM



February

2 9 16 23

BIRMINGHAM

GREAT GRAZING PLATES - Get 3 Grazing Plates for just £10! Plus, there's Rum & Ting cocktails for £4.50

THE LOFT LOUNGE

BRENDA LABEAU - Thurs 16 February - Live cabaret with Brenda LaBeau. Free entry
Missing Bar

CULT - Bringing dirty house back home. Top Floor from 10pm.
NIGHTINGALE CLUB

1 < 3 THE 90S - From 8pm with DJ Dan. Doors open from 2pm.
Missing Bar

DANNY BEARD - Thurs 9 February - Live cabaret from the Britain's Got Talent contestant. Free entry!
Missing Bar

POUNDED - £5 entry. Drinks from a £1. DJ Corey playing chart and dance on whilst Miss Mary and DJ Craig with all the pop and cheese on the middle floor.
NIGHTINGALE CLUB

CHARLIE HIDES - Thurs 23 February - A live cabaret show from the hilarious impressionist and drag queen Charlie Hides. Free entry
Missing Bar

TANGO THURSDAYS - with Marty Happy Hour 12noon-2am.
THE VILLAGE INN

THROWBACK THURSDAY - £1.20 bombs and great music!
Missing

DROP THE BOMB

SIDEWALK

SHOT EXCHANGE - Drinks price

THE CORE

WEST MIDLANDS

12.01 - with DJ James Lavett
Open from Midnight until 5am with drinks from £1
GORGEOUS, WOLVES

DISCO & DJ

THE WHITE HART, WOLVERHAMPTON

EAST MIDLANDS

2 TILL 2
or a QUIZ
THE BOSTON, NORTHAMPTON

THE BIGGEST GAY

MONDAY NIGHT IN THE MIDLANDS!



MON 6TH FEB
FANNY BURNS



MON 6TH MAR
MISS MARTY

**FREE
ENTRY
BEFORE
MIDNIGHT!**
10PM-3AM

Jabulans

PLDS: HAPPY HOUR FROM 10PM / DRINKS FROM £1 ALL NIGHT

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BIRMINGHAM

BEER & PRETZEL - Grab a free soft pretzel with any craft beer. Available throughout the day
THE LOFT LOUNGE

ALL DAY EVERY DAY PRICES - DJ Pam, takes over the weekend by playing the best of club classics, house, R&B and all your favourites. Enjoy all day every day prices too
SEAWALK

BIG GAY FRIDAY - Party anthems all night long with Missing & DJ. James. Open until the early hours
MISSING & DJ

SING STAR SUPERSTAR WITH DISCO & KARAOKE - with DJ Nikk.
EDEN BAR

FREAKY FRIDAY - Big name cabaret at midnight. Open until 6am. **Fri 3 Feb** - Drag With No Name. **Fri 10 Feb** - Miss Jason. **Fri 17 Feb** - Miss Penny. **Fri 24 Feb** - Sandra.
THE VILLAGE INN

INFUSION - Free Entry. Absolute Anthems and Floor Fillers with DJ Corey. Drinks from £2. £2 entry
NIGHTINGALE CLUB

LIP GLOSS - **Fri 3 February** - A night for the trans community, admirers and friends.
EDEN BAR

KICK START - Kick start the week end from 9pm til the early hours. Hosted by James
EDEN BAR

L8R - With Charlotte the Harlot. Open until 6am every Friday
THE VILLAGE INN

MIDSEARS - **Fri 17 February** - A night for the bear community admirers and friends
EDEN BAR

OLD SKOOL GARAGE - The first Friday of the month sees the Nightingale go back in time, playing some of the best in old skool garage. A night not to be missed.
NIGHTINGALE CLUB

RUBY MURRY - **Fri 24 February** - A night of cabaret with Ruby Murray
EDEN BAR

SAATHI - **Fri 24 February** - Every last Friday monthly. South Asian Gay and Lesbian club night. Bollywood and Bhangra.
NIGHTINGALE CLUB

SING STAR SUPERSTAR - with DJ Nikk. every Friday - your chance to win cash!
EDEN BAR

VINTAGE FRIDAYS - a night of soul, funk, rock, motown, Northern Soul and all the classic favourites
THE LOFT LOUNGE

XXL - **Fri 17 February** - Men only night with DJ Paul Morrell. Early Bear offers until 11pm. Every 3rd Friday of each month
THE CORE CLUB

FUNK D UP - **Wednesday** Saturdays

11.2am - £8 after

CLUB CHIC

THE FOX

RETRO FRIDAY - Retro tunes with DJ. Open until 2am. Open

BAR JESTER

WEST MIDLANDS

THANK FU#K ITS FRIDAY - Gorgeous residents spinning house and classics. 12am - 6am.
GORGEUS CLUB, WOLVERHAMPTON

BANG - The big weekend party. House. Free entry. 12am - 6am

THE LION, WALSALL

TV PARTY NIGHT - A Men's Night for

every Friday night at
THE GREENHOUSE, DARLSTON

CLUB NIGHT -

THE THREE FURNACES, TELFORD

FREE ENTRY FRIDAYS

RAINBOWS, COVENTRY

FRIDAY SOCIAL

THE BELL, STOUBRIDGE

THE WHITE HART, WOLVERHAMPTON

START THE WEEKEND

PINK, STOKE-ON-TRENT

TFI FRIDAY -

BREWERY TAP, WORCESTER

EAST MIDLANDS

PINK POUNDER -

THE BOSTON, NORTHAMPTON

CLUB NIGHT -

HELSINKI, LEICESTER

VALENTINES

TUESDAY 14TH FEBRUARY



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THELOFTBRUM

LOFT BIRMINGHAM

143 BROMSGROVE STREET BIRMINGHAM - 0121 622 2444



XXL LONDON

WEDNESDAYS 9PM - 3AM
SATURDAYS 10PM - 7AM
PULSE
No.1 INVICTA PLACE SE1 9UF

WWW.XXL-LONDON.COM

BIRMINGHAM

3RD FRIDAY EVERY MONTH
10PM - 4AM
THE CORE
135 SHERLOCK ST, BIRMINGHAM

FACEBOOK.COM/XXLLONDON

WILLY RUSSELL'S
SHIRLEY VALENTINE
musical



MON 6 – SAT 11 MAR
(AGES 14+)

RODDY DOYLE'S
THE COMMITMENTS



MON 13 – SAT 18 MAR



TUE 28 MAR – SAT 1 APR

ALL OR NOTHING



TUE 5 – SAT 8 APR

RAY COONEY'S
OUT OF ORDER



MON 10 – SAT 15 APR

DREAMBOATS AND PETTICOATS



TUE 2 – SAT 6 MAY

Bedtime Singer



TUE 23 – SAT 27 MAY

NEW ALEXANDRA THEATRE
BIRMINGHAM

WORLD CLASS THEATRE

ATG TICKETS

ATGTICKETS.COM/Birmingham
BOX OFFICE 0844 871 3011



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BIRMINGHAM

80S HITS - with DJ Dan from 2am it's back to the 80s.
EDEN BAR

THE ATTIC - Available for hire. Call the venue for more info. 0121 622 4256
THE ATTIC

JOANNE THE SCAMMER - Sat 25 February - The viral social media sensation Joanne the Scammer hits Birmingham in the first stop of her first ever visit to the UK!
THE NIGHTINGALE

BIG SATURDAY NIGHT OUT - Over 2 floors, 3 DJs. Open til 8am. With DJ Loity & DJ Richard Moon. With DJ Tonia in The Village underground.
THE VILLAGE INN

BIG SATURDAY NIGHT OUT - Every Saturday, with loads of drinks promotions.
NIGHTINGALE CLUB

MARY MAC - Sat 25 February - Live cabaret from the Scottish drag queen. Mary Mac. Free entry!
THE INN

CULT - Bringing dirty house back home. Top Floor from 10pm.
NIGHTINGALE CLUB

KARAOKE & COCKTAILS - in The

Attic, plus music from across the decades
THE ATTIC

LBR - With Charlotte the Harlotte Open until 8am every Saturday
THE VILLAGE INN

LA VOIX - Sat 11 February - A live cabaret show from the Britain's Got Talent semi-finalist. Free entry!
EDEN BAR

CHARLIE HIDES - Sat 4 February - A live cabaret show from the hilarious impressionist and drag queen Charlie Hides. Free entry!
EDEN BAR

SATURDAY SESSIONS - With DJ Simon Baker from 8pm.
THE LOFT LOUNGE

SATURS-FACTION - Welcome in the weekend with resident DJ, playing the best of everything
SIDEWALK

SWAGGERLICIOUS - Every Saturday night (Room 4)
NIGHTINGALE CLUB

DANNY BEARD - Sat 18 February - Live cabaret from the Britain's Got Talent contestant. Free entry!
EDEN BAR

YOUR DISCO NEEDS YOU - featuring the biggest remixes, absolute anthems, dance classics, disco house and commercial with your

host Twiggyl
MISSING

THE BREAKFAST CLUB - Every

CLUB CHIC

FABULOUS SATURDAYS

THE CORE CLUB

ALFREY STREET

THE FOX

#JUST SAYING - Get in to

BAR JESTER

KARAOKE - Every Sat night
THE WELLINGTON

WEST MIDLANDS

STRAWBERRY SATURDAYS - Wolverhampton's biggest night out with DJ Jame Levett
GORGEOUS, WOLVERHAMPTON

BIG NIGHT OUT - Every

THE LION, WALSALL

CLUB NIGHT - Every

THE THREE FURNACES, TELFORD

BIG SATURDAY NIGHT OUT - Every

RAINBOWS, COVENTRY

INCLUSION

THE BELL, STOUBRIDGE

NOT TO MISS - Free admis

PINK, STOKE ON TRENT

WEEKLY CABARET

THE WHITE HART, WOLVERHAMPTON

EAST MIDLANDS

BIG WEEKEND PARTY NIGHT - 10pm til 6am. Free entry, before 11pm. Before 1am and £5 after. **THE BOSTON, NORTHAMPTON**

CLUB NIGHT - With DJ Nik E

HELSTING, LEICESTER

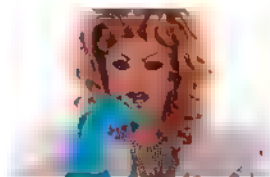
BIRMINGHAM

SUNDAY ROAST - Grab a great roast dinner to cure that hangover!
THE LOFT LOUNGE

SING STAR SUPERSTAR WITH DISCO & KARAOKE - with DJ Nikki. Every Sunday
THE INN

LOCAL CABARET - with Charlotte the Harlotte. Showcasing the best of the Midlands cabaret circuit every Sunday
THE VILLAGE INN

MISS PENNY'S SUPER SIZE SUNDAYS - Cabaret every Sunday hosted by the one and only Miss Penny on stage at 8.30pm and 10.30pm.
THE INN



NEW FOOD MENU

SIDEWALK

CHILL OUT

THE FOX

SUNDAY IS FUNDAY - With

BAR JESTER

WEST MIDLANDS

MARTY'S PARTY 9pm-4am - Fun & Games, Karaoke. Prizes and all round mayhem. Danks from £2
GORGEOUS, WOLVERHAMPTON

THE PARTY LOUNGE - Every

LION BAR & CLUB, WALSALL

KARAOKE & DJ - A night o

THE WHITE HART, WOLVERHAMPTON

RANDOM PARTY NIGHT

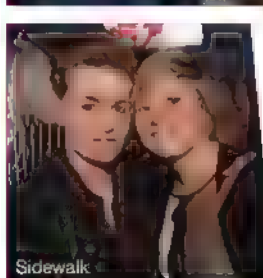
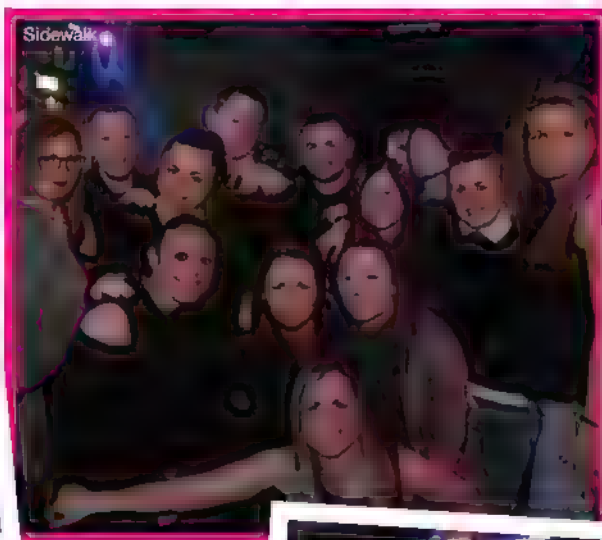
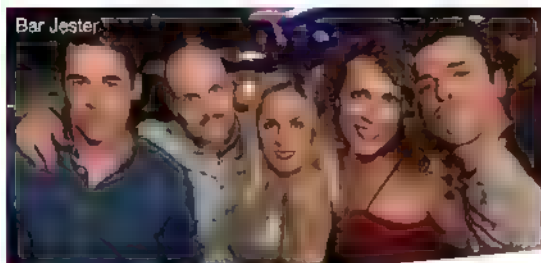
THREE FURNACES, TELFORD

EAST MIDLANDS

RAINBOW & DOVE, LEICESTER

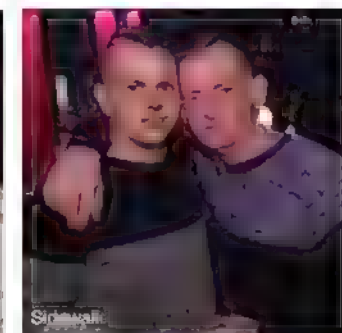
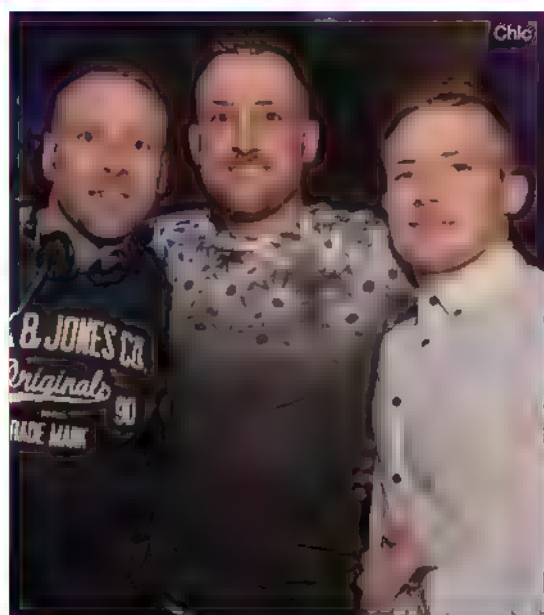
RAINBOW & DOVE, LEICESTER

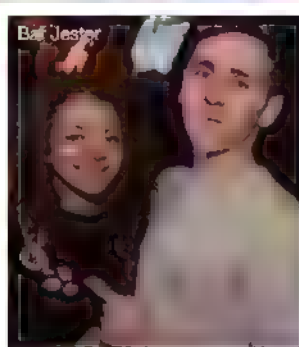
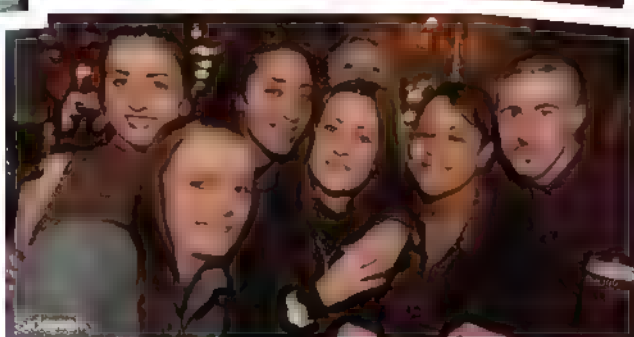
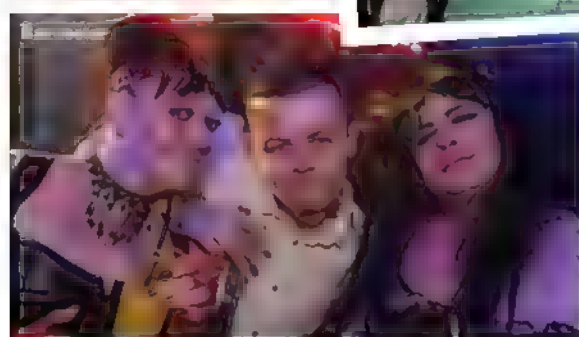
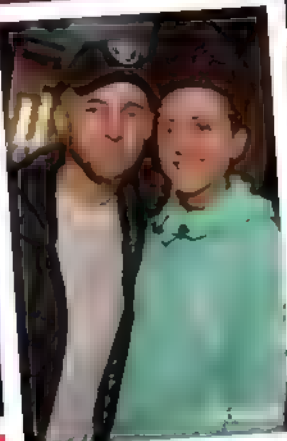
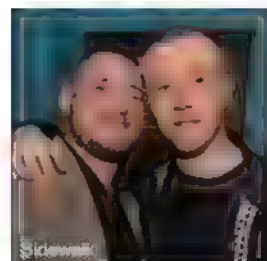
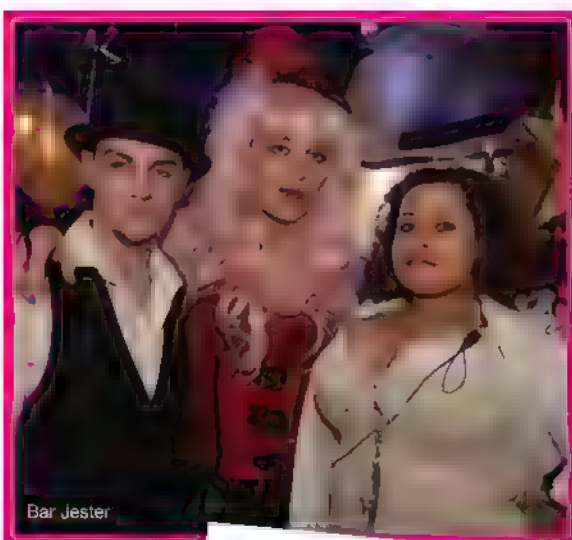
Out and about in **Birmingham's Gay Village!**



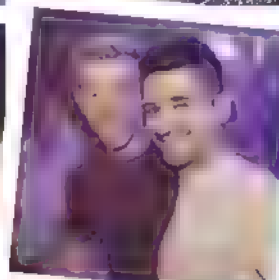
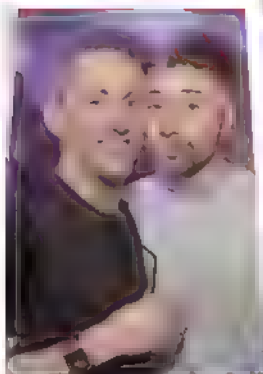
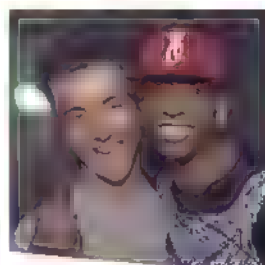
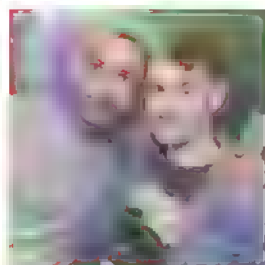
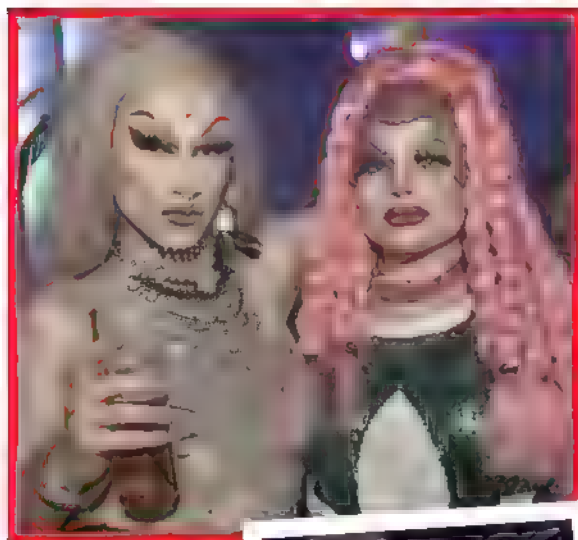
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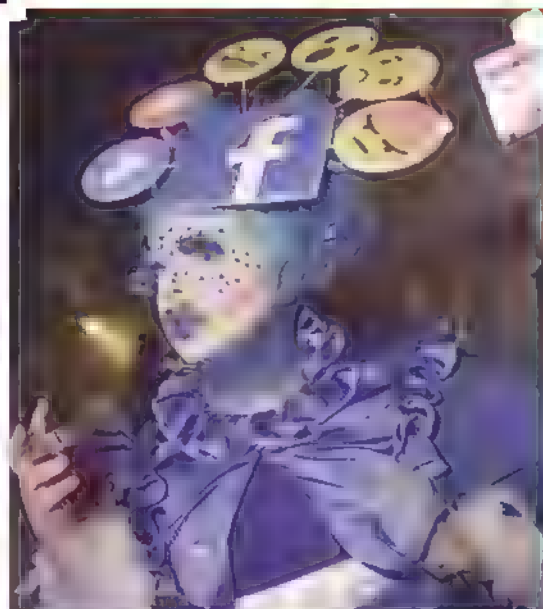
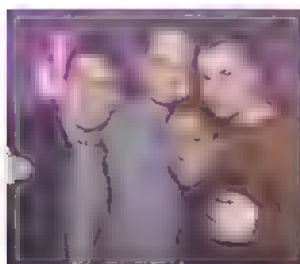




Gay superclub **The Nightingale** gets Brum dancing!

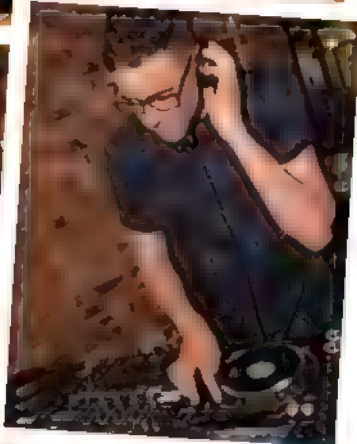
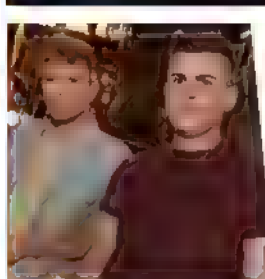
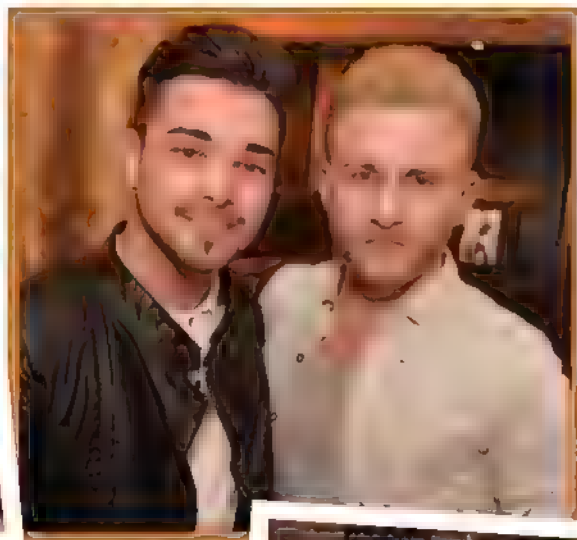


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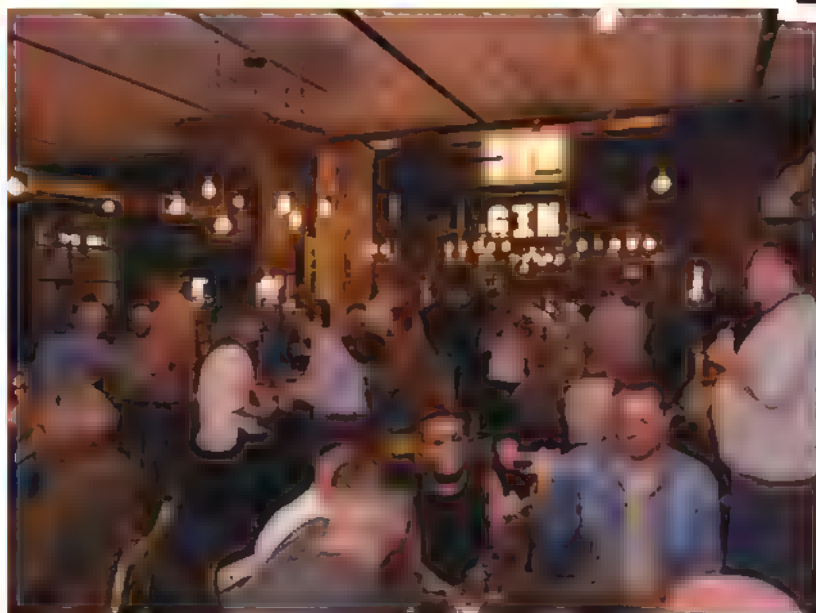


Pictures by **Laura Byrne**

The Loft: Great bites and tasty cocktails in Brum

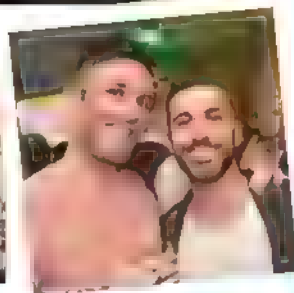
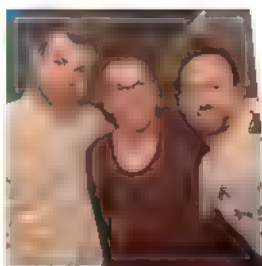
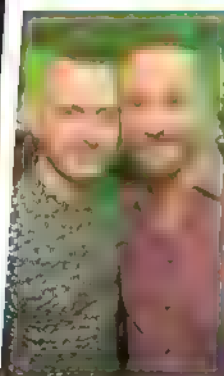
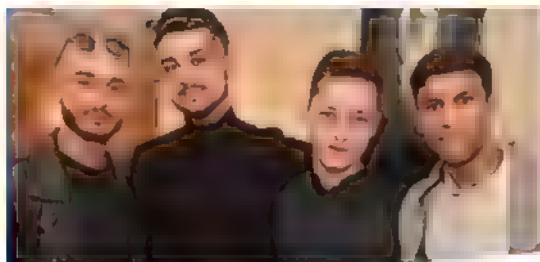
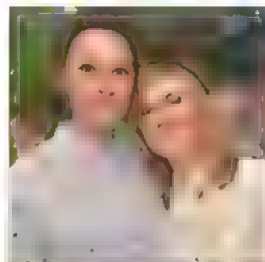
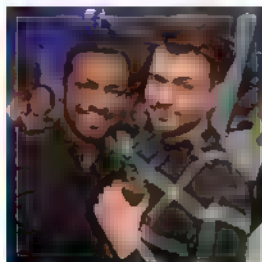


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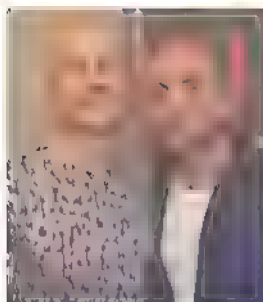
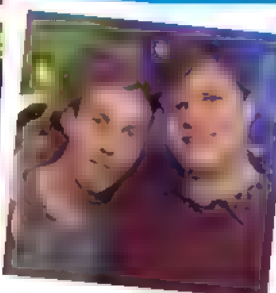


Pictures by Laura Byme

The Village Inn: It's party central at Brum gay bar!



More great photos on [facebook](#)



THE VILLAGE INN



FEBRUARY

DRAG WITH NO NAME

FRIDAY 3RD

MISS JASON

FRIDAY 10TH

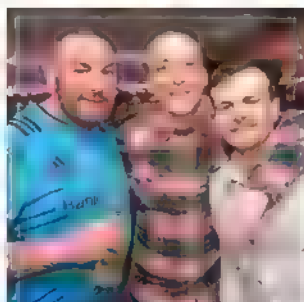
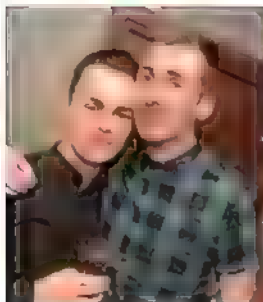
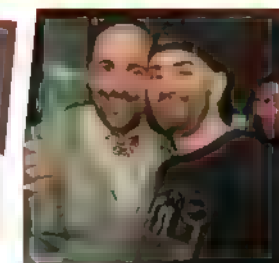
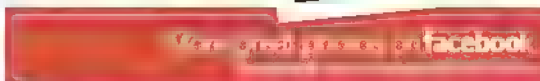
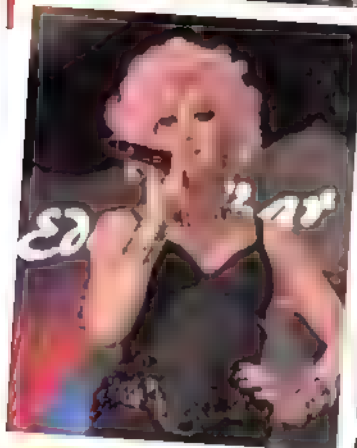
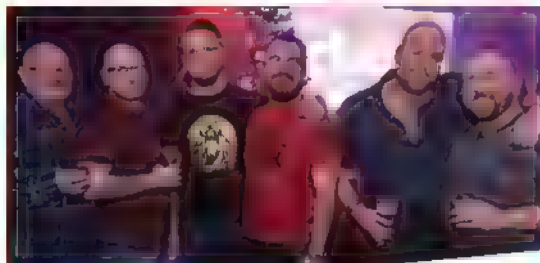
MISS PENNY

FRIDAY 17TH

SANDRA LONDON

FRIDAY 24TH

Eden is a popular hang out for the gay guys of Brum!



February Entertainment

eden

Fri
3rd

Lip Gloss

Sat
4th

Charlie Hides

Thurs
9th

Danny Beard

Sat
11th

La Voix

Thurs
16th

Brenda LaBeau

Fri
17th

Mids Bears

Sat
18th

Danny Beard

Thurs
23rd

Charlie Hides

Fri
24th

Ruby Murry

Sat
25th

Mary Mac

Every Fri

DJ Nikk
Karaoke & Disco

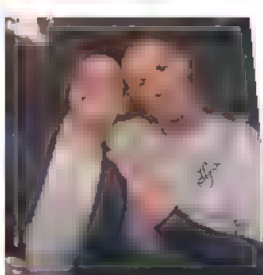
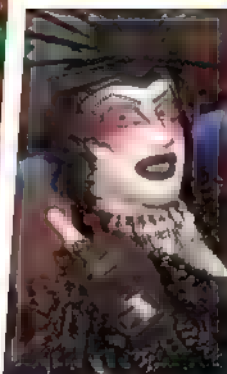
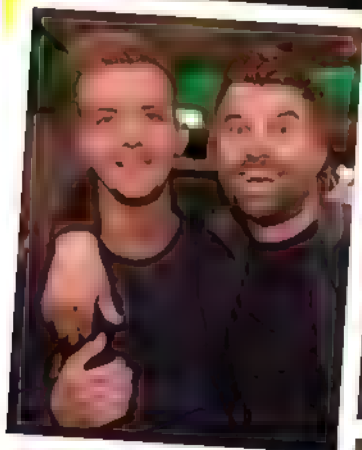
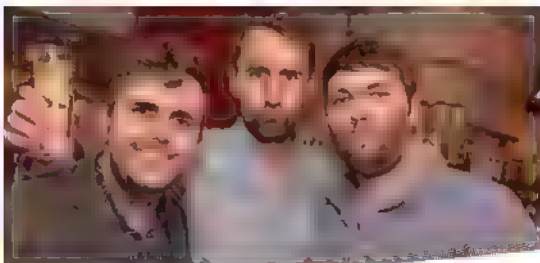
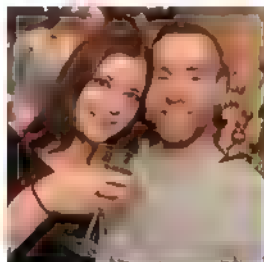
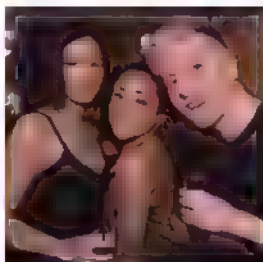
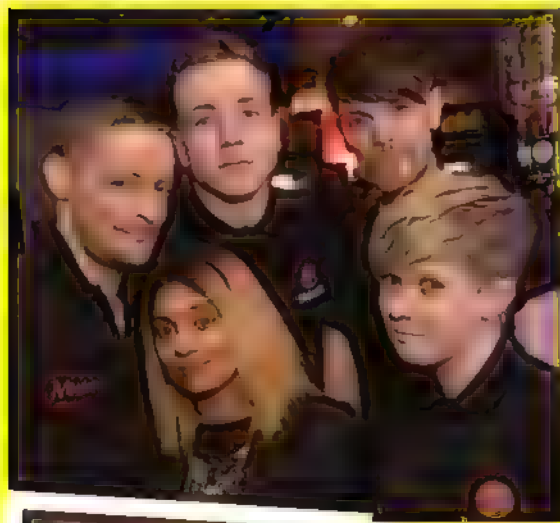
Every Sat

DJ Dan
Charts & 80's from 2am

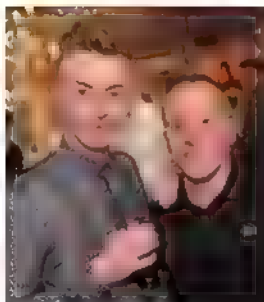
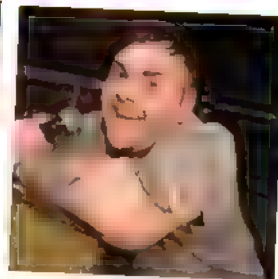
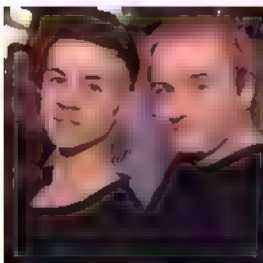
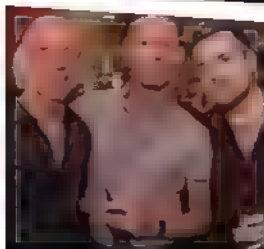
Every Sun

DJ Nikk
Karaoke & Disco

Missing always gets Birmingham in the party spirit!



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Pictures by **Laura Byrne**

MONDAYS



EVERY MONDAY NIGHT
DJ MIKE EMERY
HUGE £1 DRINK SELECTION
BIRMINGHAM'S FAVOURITE MONDAY NIGHT PARTY

Missing

TUESDAYS



FREE SHOTS FOR ALL SINGERS!

7PM-11PM

EVERY TUESDAY NIGHT
HOSTED BY "THAT BRIT" **GAVINA**

Missing

WEDNESDAYS




MISS M'S
MIDWEEK MADNESS

WINE/PIZZA/GAMES/KARAOKE AND MORE
DRINKS FROM £2.50 SHOTS FROM £1.50

Missing

THURSDAYS



BOOMBAY!

MISS M'S & SANGERS
£1.50

Missing

FRIDAYS



HITMAN AND HER

DOUBLE UP SPIRITS FOR JUST £1

EVERY FRIDAY PLAYING ALL THE BIGGEST HITS
MEANS
HOSTED BY GARY ANDY BROWN

FIZZ UP YOUR FRIDAYS

BOTTLE OF PINKISH
£12.99 FROM 7PM

Missing

SATURDAYS



YOUR DISCO NEEDS YOU

THE BIGGEST DANCING, ABSOLUTE NOTHING
WINE CLASSIC, GREEN, WHITE, CHAMPAGNE
AND MORE SATURDAY NIGHT PARTY ON HIGHEST DANCE

Missing

SUNDAYS



SAUCY SUNDAYS
with LaQueeja

ALL THE DANCE TO YOUR WEIGHT!

Missing

WEEKLY AT
Missing

GET YOUR COPY DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR EVERY MONTH

...you just pay for the postage and packing!



Yes, we know you're wondering what the catch is
Well, there isn't one!

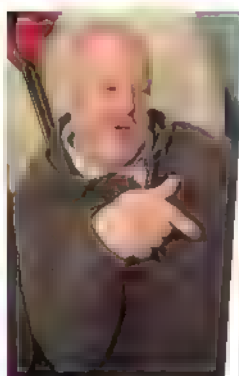
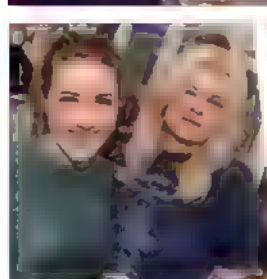
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**It's easy - just call our
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The Fox: A great place to make new friends!



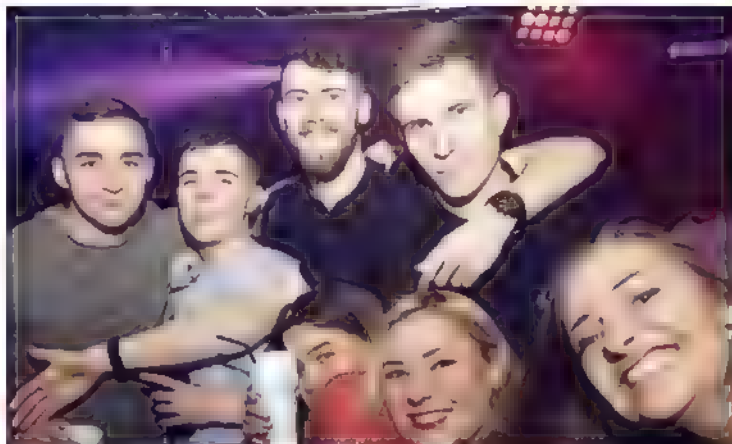
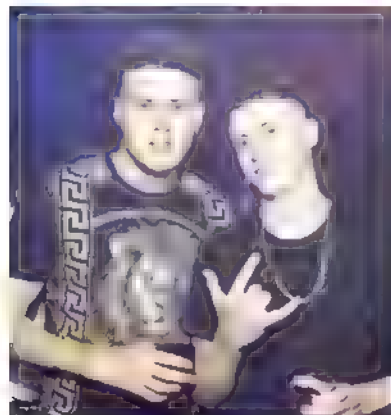
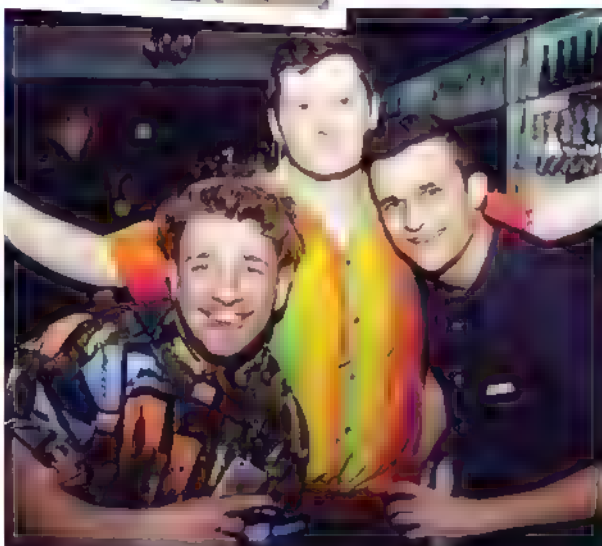
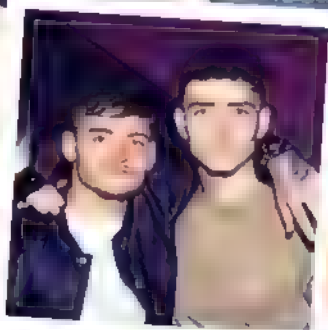
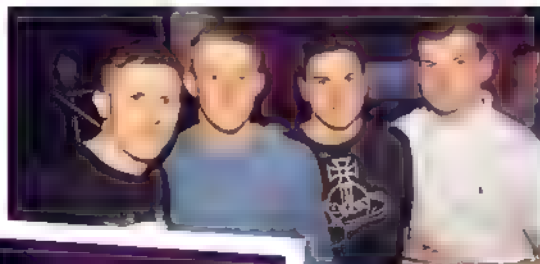
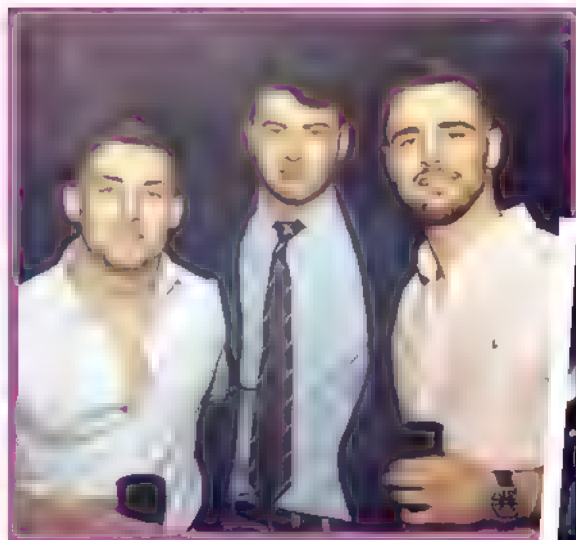
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Pictures by Laura Byme

Gorgeous is the place to be in Wolverhampton!



Pictures by JakeeeM Photography

GAY BARS AND CLUBS IN THE MIDLANDS...

BIRMINGHAM

BAR JESTER
Holloway Circus
B1 1EG
Tel: 0121 643 8344

BOLE CHAN
Lower Essex St, B5 6QP
Tel: 0121 666 6888

BOLE CHAN
28 Horsefar, B1 1DD
Tel: 0121 666 6806

THE CORE CLUB
Sherlock St, B5 6NB
Tel: 0121 622 2797
www.thecoreclub.co.uk

EDEN BAR
Sherlock St, B5 6NB
Tel: 0121 622 1953
www.theedenbar.co.uk

Eden bar
See pictures on page 70

EQUATOR
Hurst St B5 6SE
Tel: 0121 622 5077

FOUNTAIN INN
Wrentham St, B5 6QL
Tel: 0121 622 1452

THE FOX
17 Lower Essex St,
B5 6SN Tel: 0121 622 3213

THE LOFT
142 Bromsgrove St,
B5 6RG
Tel: 0121 6222 444
www.theftloftlounge.co.uk
f/TheLoft-Lounge
See pictures on page 68

MISSING BAR
Hurst St, B5 6NU
Tel: 0121 622 4256
www.missingbar.co.uk
f/missingbar

THE NIGHTINGALE
Kent St, B'ham
B5 6RD
Tel: 0121 622 1718
www.nightingaleclub.co.uk
f/thenightingaleclub

RSVP (formerly Queer Street)
Hurst St, B5 6SE
Tel: 0121 622 2444

SIDEWALK
Hurst Street
B1 1EG
Tel: 0121 666 6220
www.sidewalkbirmingham.co.uk

THE VILLAGE INN
Hurst St, B'ham
B5 4BD
Tel: 0121 622 4742
www.villagebirmingham.co.uk
f/villageinnbirmingham
See pictures on page 72

THE WELLINGTON
72 Bristol St, B5 7AH
Tel: 0121 622 2592

West Midlands

COVENTRY

SHORT ST
Short St CV1 2LW
Tel: 02476 551738

GLOUCESTER

THE WESTGATE
Westgate Street
GL1 2NF
Tel: 01452 690045

KIDDERMINSTER

ROYAL EXCHANGE
31 New Road, DY10 1AF
Tel: 01562 228619

LEEK

VALLEY
3 Stanley Street, ST13 5HG
Tel: 01538 382812

SKREWSBURY

C21 CLUB
Abbey Foregate
SY2 6AE
Tel: 01743 271821
www.c21bar.co.uk
f/C21Nightclub

THE PEACH TREE
21 Abbey Foregate
Tel: 01743 355055
www.thepeachtree.co.uk
f/ThePeachTreeRestaurant

SWIFT
22 Abbey Foregate
SY2 6AE
Tel: 01743 271821
www.spiritchampagne.co.uk
f/SpiritShrewsbury

STOKE-ON-TRENT

4 HOPE STREET
4 Hope Street
ST1 5BT
Tel: 01782 204957

93 STAFFORD STREET
ST1 1LS Tel: 01782 272772

STOURBRIDGE

THE HILL
20 Market St, DY8 1AG
Tel: 07626 518478

STRATFORD upon AVON

NO7
Prowd Crowd 1st Mon
monthly, 7 Windsor St
Tel: 07787 642510

Telford

THREE FOUNTAINS
30 Bridgnorth Rd,
Madeley TF7 4JB
Tel: 01952 588521

WALSALL

THE LION
Birchills St
WS2 8NG
Tel: 01922 610977

THE RED LION
Park St WS1 1NW
Tel: 01922 637790

WOLVERHAMPTON

14 BOND ST
14 Bond St WV2 4AS
Te: 07825 305050

GORGEOUS
School St WV1 4LF
Tel: 01902 427247
f/gorgeousbar

THE WHITE HORSE
Worcester St
WV2 4LQ
Tel: 01902 423996

WORCESTER

THE FIVE
50 Lowesmoor
WR1 2SG
Tel: 01905 780467

ANGEL ROW
Angel Row
WR1 3QN
Tel: 01905 20218

East Midlands

DERBY

THE BROWN INN
40 Curzon St
DE1 1LL
Tel: 01332 381742

LEICESTER

DOVE CASTLE
34 Dover St, LE16PT
Tel: 0116 255 3052

HELISINKI
94 Rutland St, LE1 1SB
Tel: 0116 254 7568

RAINBOW & DOVE
185 Charles St, LE1 1JA
Tel: 0116 254 7568

3-5 NEW WALK
3-5 New Walk, LE1 6RL
Tel: 0116 255 2220

YOLO
(YOLO) Gay every Wed
Belgrave Gate, LE1 3GR
Tel: 0116 251 7986

NORTHAMPTON

THE BOSTON
College St, NN1 2QP
Tel: 01604 604404

NOTTINGHAM

ST ANN'S ST
St Ann's St, NG1 3LX
Tel: 0115 958 0432

38 LOWER PARLIAMENT STREET
38 Lower Parliament
Street, NG1 3BA. (Gay
Friendly)

8 BROADWAY, NG1 1PS
8 Broadway, NG1 1PS
0115 979 9183



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ACE A Choir of Equality Meets every Thursday 5.30-7pm Tel 01902 425032

ACTING OUT An acting group for the LGBT community open to anyone. Contact: acting.out@btinternet.com or visit www.actngout.org.uk

ARTPRIDE Art group Contact: beckylebbett@hotmail.com

BARDS & BOOKS Reading group Every 1st Monday monthly LGBT Centre, Bham

B&S Birmingham Gay Symphony Orchestra. Contact: info@bgsos.org.uk or visit www.bgsos.org.uk

DUDLEY LIBRARY LGBT READERS GROUP 1st Friday Of Every Month Tel: 01384 815560

GAPP (Gay and Performing Proudly) Birmingham Call Mike 07545 507791

LEICESTER POETRY OPEN MIKE NIGHT Meets last Tues monthly at The Red Tent Tel Bobba 0777 692881

LEICESTERSHIRE RAINBOW VOICES LGBT choir Meets every Tues in Leicester. Call Chns on 07740 855248

LGBT READING GROUP Every 3rd Wednesday monthly 7pm Tel Jayne 0302 552060

JOURNEY FILM GROUP LGBT Film group meets every 1st & 3rd Tuesday monthly. www.journeyfilmclub.co.uk

RAINBOW SPIRIT Creative activities for gay men. Call Jon 07974 477206

RAINBOW VOICES LGBT choir. Call Carolyn 07828 647384 or Steve 07813 025690

SMITHWICK LIBRARY LGBT Reading Group 1st Monday monthly v. 5.45pm Tel 021 558 0497

UNTOLD STORIES LGBT History project in Leicestershire & Rutland e dennise@leicesterslgbtcentre.org

WALSALL LGBT BOOK CLUB 1st Sat monthly 11am. Walsall Central Library Contact: Kim 01922 653121



ANOTHER WAY LGBT Social group meets in Walsall every Saturday 12-2pm. Village Hub, Cardmore Walsall Tel 07475 942929

BROTHERHOOD Group for anyone transitioning from Female to Male (18+) LGBT Centre Leicester Call: Dennis 01 6 254 7412

BRUM IN GROUP Meets on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 7.30pm at the MGL drop in. Tel 07532 385760.

BRUM DINING OUT Meets at a different restaurant each month e brumdiningout@hotmail.com

CORBY LGBT NETWORK Friendship, socialising and information exchange 3rd Wed monthly, 7.30pm www.corbylgbt.co.uk

COVENTRY LADS social group away from the scene Call 02476 229292

DE MONTFORT LGBT SOCIETY Based in Leicester www.dmlgbt.co.uk

DERBYSHIRE CC Employee Network www.derbyshire.gov.uk/council/equality/employees_network/lgbt

DERBYSHIRE REACHOUT Men's Social Group Tel 01332 207704

DOSTI South Asian men's group Leicester Call 01384 254 1747

DUDLEY GAY & BISEXUAL MEN'S SOCIAL NON-SCENE GROUP 2nd Sat monthly Free buffet lunch provided. Call Matt Barlow 01384 243220

THE EDWARD CARPENTER COMMUNITY OF GAY MEN Call 08703 215121 Birmingham contact: 0121 561 3151

EVERGREEN LGBT Social Group in Bham Tel 07749 412269

FAN LGBT Social Events Group Northants www.fannorthants.co.uk

GAY CLASSIC CAR GROUP Call Simon 0121 565 4166

GAYMEZ LGBT Games Night in Wolverhampton Twice monthly Thurs 8-10pm. Tel 01902 425092

GLOUCESTERSHIRE Gay & Lesbian Community Social group meets every Thurs a. Groups Centre 7.30 Tel 07050 627273

HEREFORD LGBT Gay Men's Drop-in The Health Centre Gask Street Hereford No appointment necessary

HIGH 5 GROUP Social Group for men affected by HIV in Leicestershire Tel 0116 254 1747

HME Group for BME LGBT people in Wolverhampton 2nd Sunday monthly Tel 07817 548802

LADS CAFE Shropshire Telford & Wrekin Call 01952 22 410

LADS CAFE Weekly gathering for Gay & Bisexual men in Wolverhampton Every Monday 6-9pm Tel 07788 673666

LAVERDA MOVEMENT Planting flowers for all to enjoy Meet every Tues e thelavendarmovement@gmail.com

LEICESTER GAY GROUP Call Pete on 0116 291 6138

LEICESTER LGBT CENTRE CAFE Leicester Call 0116 254 7412

LGBT PARENTS Network for LGBT parents www.lgbtparents.net

LGBT SHREWSBURY What's happening in Shrewsbury lgbtshrewsbury.co.uk

LGBT STAFFORDSHIRE Stoke on Trent Meets every Wed at The Observatory, Hanley www.gaystoke.org.uk

NUBIAN RAINBOW Celebrating black LGBT people in the community West Midlands Social Group Tel 0121 446 1088

OUT EVERYWHERE Bringing people together since 1995 Call 08450 060050

PINK SOUTHWESTERS South West Bham LGBT Group Offers non-scene social events and activities Call 07976 274271

QUEEN NIGHT 1st Wednesday monthly 7pm a. Gorgeous Wolves Tel 01902 425092

SANDWELL Gay & Bisexual Men's Social Non-Scene Group 4th Sat monthly Free buffet lunch provided. Call Matt Barlow on 01384 243220

SHREWSBURY CHILL OUT Mondays 1st Mon monthly at Old Market Hall Gate 8.15pm. Shrewsbury

SOUTH ASIANS LGBT Finding A voice Social Group in Birmingham Meet once a month at Bham LGBT Centre Call 0121 643 1160

THIRD WAY Social Group for Bi people over 18 Every 3rd Tuesday monthly in Wolverhampton 7.30pm. Tel 01902 425092

TRUE COLOURS Derby based BME LGBT Social group Call 07779 560284

WAGS Walsall Activities Social Group Over 18s only e scawwalsall@hotmail.com

WARWICK PRIDE Social society. Organises events on and around the University Campus e warwickpride.org

WOLVERHAMPTON LGBT NETWORK Community Group www.brewery-lab.org.uk

WS-MIDLANDS LGBT Social group Every 1st Tues monthly 7-9pm in Walsall Tel 07895 661557

LGBT Forum

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL EMPLOYEE NETWORK Formed in 2002. Email: boclgbt@hotmail.com

BIRMINGHAM LGBT COMMUNITY TRUST campaigning and lobbying promoting community cohesion and representing LGBT community's views e davenny@lgbt.org

BIRMINGHAM LGBT COMMUNITY TRUST FORUM For LGBT Groups Quarterly Forum open to all LGBT groups for networking e davenny@lgbt.org

BLACK GAY & BISEXUAL MEN'S DISCUSSION FORUM A safe discrete confidential space for black men to discuss issues that affect their lives Call 021 446 1088

GAY BIRMINGHAM REMEMBERED LGBT history

proved e dave@gay.birmingham.remembered.org.uk

LEICESTER LGB & T CENTRE Host numerous social groups Call 0116 254 7412

LGBT WOLVERHAMPTON To raise and develop the profile of the Wolves LGBT community Tel 01902 425092

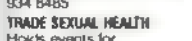
MIDLANDS LGBT EMPLOYEES NETWORK Call 02476 432711

NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE Gay Men's Drop-in Call 01782 425968

PINK SHIELD Working to make Birmingham a safer place for the LGBT Community Tel 0121 622 2592

RAINBOW HERITAGE Nottinghamshire Call 0115 934 8485

TRADE SEXUAL HEALTH Holds events for professionals and the LGBT community Tel 0116 254 1747



EMBRACE Group for gay and bi men in Coventry aged over 50 Rainbows Coventry Call James on 07824 448717 or Nicholas on 02476 231999

LADS LUNCH Monthly lunch for mature Gay & Bisexual men in Wolverhampton 3rd Sat monthly 11am-2pm Tel 01902 425092

LGBT 50+ Social group for mature LGBT people. Contact 01752 201251 or asku@staffordshirebuddies.co.uk

MATURE GAY GROUP Meets in Shrewsbury every Friday 11am-1pm Call Trevor on 07779 861640

MATURE GAY MEN For older gay bi men Call Tom or Paul on 0746 399 2196

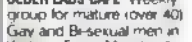
OLDER LADS CAFE Weekly group for mature (over 40) Gay and Bi-sexual men in Wolves Every Monday 1-4pm Tel 01902 425092

OLDER LIDS Women's network social group Derby based Call 07779 560284

RUBY'S A mature lesbian & bisexual women's group. Tel 01902 425092

SILVER SIP-PERS coffee morning for people aged 50+ Call 0116 254 74 2

STOKE OLDER PERSONS GROUP Social group for mature LGBT Tel 01782 288998



BIRMINGHAM BUDDHIST CENTRE Meditation Drop-in classes Tel 0121 449 5279

BIRMINGHAM L G C M Christian or Janesation group Tel 07943 010345

CHANGING ATTITUDE Contact: The Revd Colin Coward on 01380 724908

COVENTRY LGCM (Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement) Tel: 07984 224391

DERBY QUEST for Spirituality Sun 5-6 30pm Tel 07970 812957

JOURNEY METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH Birmingham Call 0121 454 4406 Wolverhampton Call 07734 155664

LEICESTER GAY CATHOLICS A group for lesbian gay bisexual and trans people their families and friends. Tel 07905 421915

LESBIAN & GAY CHRISTIANS Lesbian and gay Christian movement Tel 0121 453 1299 or texted 07943 010345

QUAKER Lesbian & Gay Fellowship Social and supportive group founded on Quaker spiritual principles www.qglf.org.uk

QUEST LINKLINE A national, helpline service for lesbian, gay and bisexual Catholics Tel 0800 808 0234

RAINBOW MOOT LGBT Pagans All Pagan paths welcome Call Rob 07943 323889

STAFFORDSHIRE LESBIAN AND GAY CHRISTIANS Support group for lesbian and gay christians e ama2410@hotmail.com or call 079 4 7647



BIRMINGHAM BLAZE LGBT Friendly Football Team. www.birmingham-blaze.co.uk

BIRMINGHAM BULLS LGBT friendly Rugby Team Call Andy 07746 536416 or visit birminghambullsrlc.com

BIRMINGHAM SWIFTS LGBT running group meeting weekly For more information visit www.birminghamswifts.co.uk

BOURNVILLE LADIES HOCKEY CLUB LGBT friendly hockey in south Birmingham www.bournvillehc.co.uk

BOURNVILLE WILDCATS LGBT friendly football team Call or text Gareth 07825 581938

LGBT Community Indoor Football Wolverhampton Tel 01902 425092

LGBT TABLE TENNIS CLUB 1st & 3rd Wed monthly 7-8 30pm Tel 0121 643 0821

LGBT Zumba Wolverhampton Tel 01902 425092

GAY OUTDOOR CLUB Walks twice a month on Sundays

Contact gocwm@yahoo.co.uk

MIDLANDS OUT BADMINTON Birmingham Call Andy on 024 6 346141

MOSLEY SHOALS Birmingham's GOC Gay Swim Group. For info: call 021 346 1522

NOTTINGHAM LIONS Gay football team founded in 2006 www.nottinghamlions.com

OUTDOORLADS Outdoor pursuits group for gay lads www.outdoorlads.com

STOKE PANTHERS BADMINTON SQUASH CLUB Call Andy on 01782 268986 5167

WOLVES WALKERS Tel 01902 425092

WOLVES WARRIORS Football Club Tel Andy on 07825 305050



BIRMINGHAM CITY UNI LGBT Social events every week www.bcuclb.com

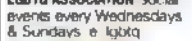
LGBT & FRIENDS SOCIETY University of Derby Students Union www.udslgbt.com

LGBT ASTON UNIVERSITY Tel 0121 204 3000

STUDENT GROUPS Leicester University contact: dmlgbt@outlook.com

at j5762@student.le.ac.uk for University of Leicester

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM LGBT ASSOCIATION Social events every Wednesdays & Sundays e lgblq@quid.bham.ac.uk



BIRMINGHAM GIRLS e-mail network e Birmingham Girlsnetwork@btinternet.com

BIRMINGHAM GIRLS BOOK GROUP Women-centered book group Meets 1st Sun of the month 3-5pm Tel 0121 622 3213

BI WOMEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP For information contact Bobbie at space31808@hotmail.com

BOOTWOMEN Walks in the Midlands Area. Call 07505 970891

BORDER WOMEN Network for lesbian and Bi women www.borderwomen.net

L BOW ROOM Social Group for women over 18 Meets every 2nd & 4th Wednesday monthly Tel 0116 254 8802

DO YOU NEED TO GIVE YOUR LGBT COMMUNITY GROUP BETTER EXPOSURE?

We're always looking for Community News and Community articles to include in our Community Profile

Do you need to feature your group? contact Ryan Humphreys (Editor) on 01743 281722

To find out more about all these organisations visit www.midlandszone.co.uk

To get your LGBT Group listed: Call Adrian Parker on 01743 281714

FOX FILM CLUB Women-centred film club every 3rd Sunday monthly
www.tourbar.co.uk

KIDDERMINSTER GIRLS Lesbian social group meets bi-weekly at local pub. e: jillygalore@blueyonder.co.uk

OLDEN LESBIAN GROUP for the over 40's meets every 2nd Saturday of the month at 1pm at 10 Norton Tower. Contact on: sue@hotmail.co.uk

RUBY'S Mature Women's Group Wolverhampton. Tel: 01902 425092

RUBYFRUIT WOMEN Leicester based non-scene social group for lesbian, bisexual and questioning women of all ages. Wednesday nights from 7pm. Tel: 07512 156474

THE PINK LINK is a social space in Staffordshire for women with a different vision. Call: 01782 266998

WORCESTER LESBIAN GROUP Meets twice monthly. e: me_myself_173@outlook.com



1ST OUT YOUTH GROUP Leicester LGBT Centre, 15 Wellington Street, Leicester. Call: Paul Foxon on 0116 254 7412

DERBYSHIRE LGBT Youth Forum. Tel: 01332 207704
GALAXY Group for lesbian, gay and bisexual young people aged 18 and under in Stoke on Trent and North Staffordshire. Call 0300 123 0970

H-MIX Group for young LGBTQ people in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin. Call: 01952 221410

OUTBURST Nottingham Support group for LGBT young people. Tel: 0115 952 5040

OUT CENTRAL LGBT youth group for young people 13-19 who are LGBT or questioning their sexuality. Call 07826 873458

OUT EAST Youth group based in Sutton Coldfield. Tel: 07795 611781

PRISM LGBTQ Support group for young people in Coventry. info@prismgbtq.org

UNIQUE Group for young LGBTQ people. Meet twice monthly on Sundays. Call Matt or Justin 01384 243220

XZY Group for young LGBT people in Wolverhampton. Every Saturday. e: info@xzy.org.uk

HIV AIDS Helplines

ABPLUS A Charity supporting people living with and affected by HIV. Call 0121 622 6471

FAITHFUL Holistic care and support for people with life threatening illness. Tel: 0121 415 8670 (8 lines)

HEALTHY GAY LIFE - BIRMINGHAM Free confidential service working with Gay/Bisexual men to promote sexual, mental and social health and well-being. Tel: 0121 440 6161

LEICESTERSHIRE AIDS SUPPORT SERVICES Tel: 0116 255 9995

STAFFORDSHIRE BUDDIES Confidential help and support for people living with or affected by HIV. Tel: 01782 201251

SUMMIT HOUSE SUPPORT Practical Support and confidential advice around all HIV/AIDS related issues in the Dudley / Sandwell borough. Tel: 01384 243220

TERENCE HIGGINS TRUST Offer a range of services for those infected and affected by HIV and STIs Birmingham: 0121 694 1000

SOLIHULL 0121 694 6440
Coventry: 02476 229292
Nottingham: 0115 882 0121

Telford 01952 221410
Wolves 01902 711818

TRADE SEXUAL HEALTH Offers a range of confidential services advice and support for LGBT communities affected by HIV & STIs. Leicester Tel: 0116 254 1747

LGBT Helplines

COVENTRY & WARWICK SHIRE FRIEND Tel: 02476 714199

DERBYSHIRE LGBT SWITCHBOARD Tel: 01332 349333

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INTEGRATED RESPONSE PROJECT Leicester. Tel: 0116 255 0004

STAFFORDSHIRE Tel: 0300 123 0970

HATE CRIME NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE Talk to a Hate Crime officer in complete confidence. Stoke area. Tel: 01782 266998 (Lolita Higgins) North Staffs Tel: 01785 233458 (John Wilson)

LGB COUNSELLING SERVICE Free counselling service for all sorts of LGB related issues. Call: 01782 425969

LGBT AA MEETING West Midlands. 8pm every Sat. Summit House, Dudley. Tel: 01384 243220

LGBT STAFFORDSHIRE Stoke on Trent & North Staffs.

Tel: 01782 266998

NOTTINGHAM LESBIAN & GAY SWITCHBOARD 0115 934 8485 or text 07481 344040

RAINBOW SUPPORT, HEREFORDSHIRE free and confidential support. Call 07507 447834

TRADE SEXUAL HEALTH Offers counselling services and one to one support for LGB communities. Leicester. Tel: 0116 254 1747

VICTIM SUPPORT Provides emotional support and practical help to anyone who has been a victim of crime. Tel: 0300 303 1977

Sexual Health

BIRMINGHAM LGBT CENTRE Support Groups, Sexual Health Testing, Cafe, Community Groups Events and more. Tel: 0121 643 0621

THE BRIDGE CENTRE Shrewsbury. A free sexual health service for gay and Bisexual men. Tel: 01743 344474

WOLVERHAMPTON Free and confidential sexual health services in the West. Tel: 0121 248 2500

DUDLEY GAY MEN'S PROJECT Free & Confidential support service for gay, bi-sexual and MSM men living in or around Dudley. Call: Matt Barlow 07980 906895

HAUTHORNE HOUSE Sexual health testing also operates a Walk In Service every morning from 9.30am - 11.30am. Tel: 0121 424 3300 or 0121 424 2456

HEALTHY GAY LIFE Birmingham: Free confidential service working with Gay/Bisexual men to promote sexual, mental and social health and well-being. Call 0121 440 6161

HEREFORD INTEGRATED SEXUAL HEALTH CLINIC 29-30 Commercial Road Hereford. Call: 01432 266908

HIV FAST TEST Free 20 minute HIV testing in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin. Call: 01952 221410

HIV TESTING by appointment at Summit House, West Bromwich. Call Matt Barlow on 01384 243220 or 0121 500 5205

KWIK PRICK Rapid HIV Testing. Leicester. Call: 0116 254 1747

LGBT SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE Free services for the LGBT community who work or reside in South Staffs. Tel: 01782 201251

MEN ONLY Sexual Health Clinic at Heroes Health Club, Stourbridge. Call 01296 444444

MEN'S HIV FAST TEST CLINIC

Free 20 minute testing in Nottingham. 1st Monday monthly. Call: Adrian on 0115 883 9081

OUTMINDS A social support group for gay and bisexual men with mental health problems living in the Solihull borough. Call: 0121 742 4941

SANDWELL GAY & BI MEN'S SERVICE Sexual health and social support. Call Matt Barlow 07980 906895

THE RAINBOW PRACTICE Every 1st & last Wednesday of the month Held at The Gay Men's Drop-in. Call: 0300 123 0970

TRADE SEXUAL HEALTH Offers a range of confidential services for LGB individuals and support for HIV & STIs including testing services. Leicester. Tel: 0116 254 1747

WALSALL GAY MEN'S HEALTH PROJECT Delivering health and social care services to the LGBT community. Tel: 01922 613141

WHITALL STREET A sexual health clinic located in Birmingham city centre. Tel: 0121 237 5700

WORCESTERSHIRE GAY MEN'S HEALTH PROJECT providing free, confidential advice & support. Tel: 01905 681751

Support Groups

Applis Poz Gay Men's Group. Meets 1st Thursday monthly for information and support. Call: Peter on 07960 404926

ALCOHOL & DRUGS SMART Recovery SMART meetings in a friendly environment. e: smartgbt@yahoo.com

BIRMINGHAM PARENTS' SUPPORT GROUP Meets 1st Wednesday Bi-monthly in Solihull. Tel: Helen on 0121 711 8106

BEAM (Black ethnic & Asian Minority) Social and Support Group in Leicester. Call 0116 254 7412

COVENTRY & WARWICKSHIRE FRIEND gay, lesbian, bisexual or trans? Need to talk? Call 02476 714199 Mon - Fri 7.30pm - 9pm

CHANGES Based in Wolverhampton. Call: Lisa on 07964240222 or Maria on 07542 450163

DOSTI South Asian men's support group. Leicester. Call: 0116 254 1747

GROUP ONE Derby based support group for LGBT families. call: 07779 560284

HGL COUNSELLING & PSYCHOTHERAPY Mental and sexual health for lesbians, bisexuals, gay men and trans people with

a choice of male or female counsellors. Tel: 0121 446 1085 or 07976 919481

HGL MARRIED MEN'S GROUP Support and advice for married men. Call: 0121 440 6161

HIGH 5 GROUP An HIV awareness group for gay/bisexual men who are affected by HIV. Group provides Support, events, outings. Leicester. Tel: 0116 254 1747

HIV MEN'S GROUP Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin. Call: 01952 221410

HIV WOMEN'S GROUP Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin. Call: 01952 221410

INFORMAL ONE TO ONE SUPPORT A service for young men, south Asian men and African Caribbean men. Tel: 0121 440 6161 Email: info@hgl.nhs.uk

LEICESTER LGBT CENTRE Most numerous support groups. Call: 0116 254 7412

LGBT ALCOHOL SUPPORT GROUP Offer support to anybody in the gay community who has alcohol related problems. Tel: Tony on 0121 440 8161 or 07760 195642

LGBT NETWORK Stoke on Trent & North Staffordshire. Tel: 01782 266998

LGBT NETWORK Wolverhampton. Holistic support for LGBT people in the Black Country. Tel: 01902 425092

LGBT COUNSELLING - Wolverhampton. Tel: 01902 425092

LGBT PROFESSIONALS in Wolverhampton. Meets once a month. Tel: 01902 425092

MIND OUT Mental Health Support Group in Wolverhampton. 1st and 3rd Wednesday monthly. Tel: 01902 425092

NATURAL HEALING For emotional and physical health. Contact Alison - Lesbian Homeopath. Tel: 01902 688087

NEW ROAD PARENTS Bromsgrove and surrounding areas. Supporting parents of LGBT people

Meets bi-monthly on the 1st Tue. Tel: Margaret 01527 832492

PINK PARENTS A social networking group for all lesbian and gay parents and their children. E pinkparents@virginmedia.com

PINK OUTSIDERS Support group for LGB armed forces personnel - past & present. Helpline: 0870 740 7755

RAPE & SEXUAL VIOLENCE PROJECT BIRMINGHAM Free confidential counselling for LGBT survivors of sexual/ domestic violence and hate crimes. Tel: 0121 643 0301

SANDWELL Gay & Bisexual Men's Drop-in Service. Every Friday. Tel: 01384 243220

SWAIN Wynn Farm Meets the first Wednesday monthly. For more details phone Tel: 07842 070 240

TIME OUT COUNSELLING - Coventry. For all LGBT + people. Tel: 07936 525668

WORCESTER LGBT NETWORK Tel: 01905 429800

Trans Support

LEICESTER BUTTERFLIES for info visit facebook.com /groups/butterfliesleicester/

OUTSKIRTS TRANS-GENDER SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUP The West Midlands largest transgender social support group. Email: sally@outskirtsgt.co.uk or visit www.outskirtsgt.co.uk

SANCTUARY Providing support and practical help. Tel: 01902 744424

SANCTUARY STOKE Support people who are Transsexual, Transvestite or Transgender in North Staffs. www.gaystoke.org.uk

TRANS SOUTH STAFFS Support and monthly group for the whole Trans community. Tel: 01782 201251

TRANS SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUP Meets every 1st and 3rd Monday monthly. Tel: 01902 425092



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Tel: 01543 421840

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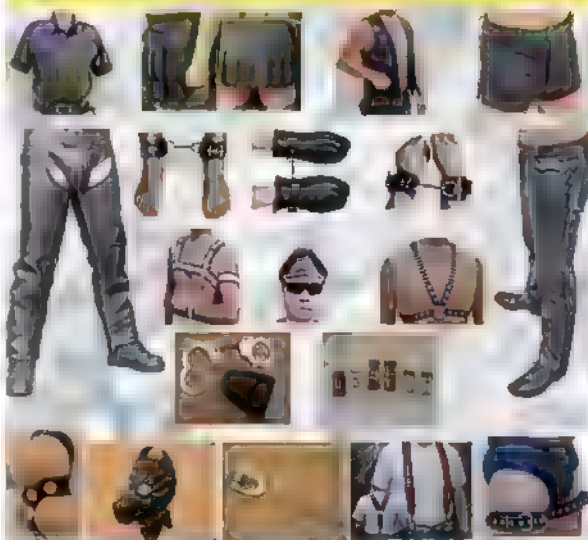
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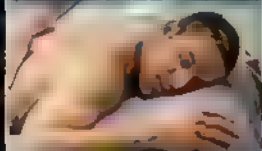
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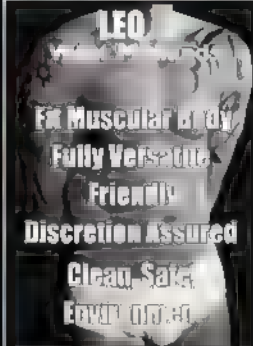


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THE LIFE OF A THIRTYSOMETHING GAY by Stephen Spinks

Crooked Cupid

I have something of a love-hate relationship with Scruff and Grindr. Call them what you will - 'dating' apps, 'hook up' apps, 'friendship' apps, 'pain in the ass' apps - they have crept into our lives and at times devour us.

I go in phases. Last year I made a New Year's resolution to come off Scruff and Grindr altogether. For an added challenge, I threw in Facebook too, having got bored at looking at what people were eating for dinner or seeing cute baby pics posted by many of my straight friends who are either married, having kids or moving onto divorce. My abstinence lasted all of two weeks - except for Facebook, which I stretched out till June. Clearly cute baby pics don't melt my ice- maiden's heart!

As a new year gets underway, I'm determined not to make the same mistake again. At the moment, I'm feeling love for my apps, but as with all things kitsch, their capacity to obsess is growing. I find the ongoing compulsion to flick through them in between any human activity insufferably overwhelming.

My morning ritual has become staid - wake up, flick through Scruff, flick through Instagram, flick through Twitter, flick back through Scruff just in case a fuzzy otter has appeared in the last three minutes and he's actually 'the one'. He inevitably hasn't.

Perhaps it's me? Perhaps I'm ugly? Perhaps I'm dull? Perhaps I'm too fat and need to change the pic? Whatever I work through, it always ends the same; feeling depressed before I get up to meet the day. And repeat.

Is this the grim reality of dating on the gay scene now? What happened to 'the date'? Those exciting but equally gut-wrenching moments when we placed ourselves at our most vulnerable, sitting face-to-face in a bar or restaurant and actually talking like adults, taking the time to find something a little more meaningful and long lasting. At least over dinner you're not likely to whack out a dick pic before dessert, saving that delight for a later reveal. My mate firmly believes the first time you should see a dick is when it's in your hand. We debate fiercely. But it got me thinking. I think Cupid has gone crooked, or better still fucked off to the Bahamas for a bit of TLC whilst the world recovers from the melodrama of 2016.

Now don't get me wrong, dates are scary things. You actually have to expose your vulnerabilities and make interesting spur-of-the-moment conversation. But without being in a room together, how's it remotely possible to find an emotional connection? An app just can't give you that, however excellent the allegedly 'no filter' image is. That's why conversations run dry, people get bored, or by the time you meet, there's little to say because you've already said it all. The beautiful guy in front of you simply becomes 'just alright'. Had you held back the chat and met sooner, he'd probably be fit hot, because he's both mysterious and new. The connection would be on a deeper, more interesting level, as you both seek to understand how the other person ticks. It starts at dinner, not before. Why have we forgotten this, or become too scared of rejection? Rejection allows us to refine our search. A date is like an interview; it's two-way. You both get to eye up the goods, both physical and beyond, in a more genuine way.

In a throwaway society where everything is both immediate and largely obtainable, have we gone down the dangerous path of thinking that we are too? Or rather, those who we peer at, perv or reject on our apps? Are we too quick to throw away a diamond because we find reason to identify flaws where often there are none? As I listen to many of my single friends bemoaning the futility of it all, and those in relationships bemoaning the futility of partnerships, I wonder whether we're at serious risk of thinking the grass is always greener. Do apps fill this void?

But then, of course, that presumes that you even want to connect in an emotional way. Some people, me at times, don't give a flying fuck about Cupid, crooked or not. It makes me angry that if you're single, everyone automatically assumes you don't want to be. What the fuck? Sometimes, perhaps all the time, living a single life, free and without compromise, certainly has its perks. Collecting dick pics is kinda alright, and an easy hook-up is all it takes to keep life from falling off the edge.

You might not want someone cramping your style, living in your house or driving your car, but then you don't get to wake up next to them either. For some, this is the dream.

ON THE BALL with Steve Ball

Inspiration

Sport's not really my thing. I try to keep fit, and I enjoy swimming and running, but football, rugby and cricket don't really do it for me. So when I was invited to the BBC Sports Personality of the Year reception just before Christmas, I struggled to find much enthusiasm.

But any fears about ending up in a roomful of alpha males were quickly dispelled when I realised how much talent there was! I started talking to one strapping fella who turned out to be the gay Australian swimming champion Ian Thorpe. He won five Olympic gold medals, the most won by any Australian, and was the most successful athlete at the 2000 Summer Olympics. I'm normally quite good at staying cool when meeting famous people, but he left me gabbling like a nervous teenager.

But Ian Thorpe wasn't the only gay athlete there. Lee Pearson - who has since received a knighthood in the 2017 New Year's Honours list - was also present. He's the most successful para-equestrian of all time, winning 11 Paralympic gold medals, 14 World Championship titles and five European golds.

And then, to top it all, marathon man Ben Smith, who completed an amazing 401 marathons in 401 days, was presented with the Helen Rollason Award for achievement in the face of adversity.

Having suffered homophobic bullying as a child for eight years at school, Ben wanted to raise awareness of the damage it had caused and to support his chosen charities, Kidscape and Stonewall, raising £250,000. Ben spoke passionately about the bullying he'd experienced, how it had affected his confidence and self-esteem, and how it had led him to attempt to take his own life when he was 18. His 401 Challenge involved hundreds of people and got children, young people and adults talking about bullying and sexuality.

As we enter a new year full of uncertainty and challenge, it's great to see such inspiring stories coming from our own LGBT community. I just need to get my own gym kit out of the laundry basket!



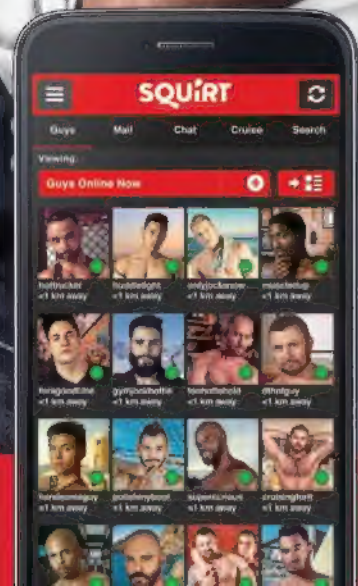


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